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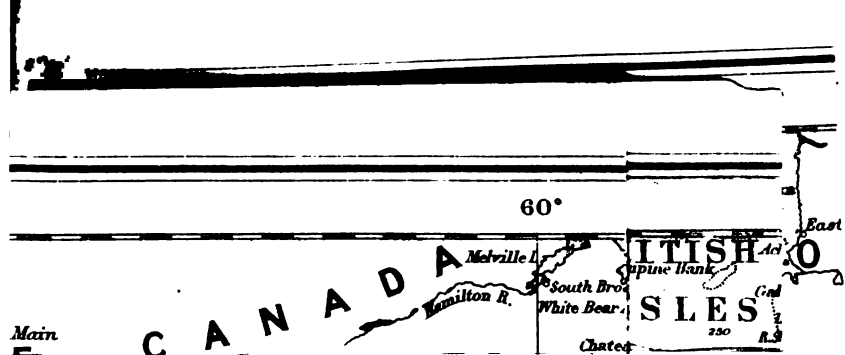
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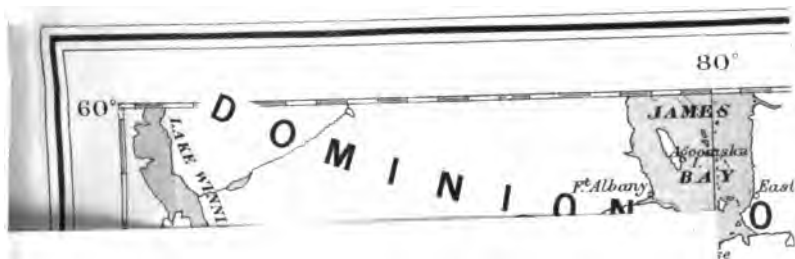
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TROPICAL VEGETATION.

A
GLIMPSE OF THE TROPICS

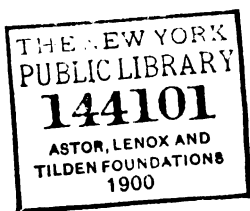
OR, FOUR MONTHS CRUISING IN THE
WEST INDIES

BY
E. A. HASTINGS JAY, LL.B., F.R.G.S.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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	PAGE
I. THE VOYAGE,	9
II. BARBADOS,	23
III. BARBADOS TO TRINIDAD,	62
IV. TRINIDAD,	74
V. ST LUCIA,	107
VI. MARTINIQUE AND DOMINICA,	148
VII. HAYTI,	187
VIII. JAMAICA—THE NORTH-WEST ROUTE,	201
IX. JAMAICA—THE EAST COAST,	244
X. JAMAICA—THE BLUE MOUNTAINS,	271
CONCLUSION,	283

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
TROPICAL VEGETATION,	<i>Frontispiece</i>
CACTUS PLANTS, BARBADOS,	35
NEGRO QUARTER, BRIDGETOWN,	60
JOHNNY CROW, PORT OF SPAIN, TRINIDAD,	78
MANGROVE ROOTS,	81
CACAO TREE,	91
MANGOES AND BANANA PLANTS, ST LUCIA,	116
THE PITONS, ST LUCIA,	142
HOT SPRINGS, DOMINICA,	169
THE BOILING LAKE, DOMINICA,	181
THE RIO COBRE OR COPPER RIVER,	216
OCHO RIOS,	226
A JAMAICA RUM-SHOP,	230
OUR BUGGY, JAMAICA,	242
COAST SCENERY,	258
HOME-LIFE, JAMAICA,	272

"A GLIMPSE OF THE TROPICS."

CHAPTER I.

THE VOYAGE.

THE special train in connection with the Royal Mail Steamer leaves for Southampton at ten o'clock, and whirls its passengers thither in the space of about two hours. Waterloo Station was a scene of bustle and excitement that morning. Here and there were little groups eagerly exchanging a few last words before those who were departing should be whisked away, porters rushing to and fro with luggage, and passengers crowding round the book-stalls to buy papers and novels, and generally to provide themselves with all necessary materials for a long voyage.

At last the whistle sounded, and the train glided slowly out of the station, hats and handkerchiefs waving all along the platform, while heads were craned out of the windows to get a last glimpse of faces left behind.

It was a bright spring-like morning at the end of January, and many beautiful glimpses of English scenery succeeded one another as we flew through the heather and pinewoods of Weybridge, Woking, and Brookwood, and then, passing Basingstoke, through Winchester with its grand old school and historic cathedral, through the beautiful water-meadows between Winchester and Eastleigh, until eventually, after crawling slowly through the streets of Southampton, we found ourselves alongside the pier from which the tender starts.

The luggage was rattled across, tickets were shown, and passengers and their friends poured on to the little steamboat, till there was scarcely standing room on the deck. One of the railway officials came on board with letters and telegrams, calling out the names, and in a few minutes we were steaming away down Southampton Water toward the good ship *Don*, which was lying at anchor off Netley. As we approached her, it was difficult to realise that we were to be prisoners there for twelve days and nights, and to be carried nearly four thousand miles into tropical latitudes.

The saloon was crowded with passengers entertaining their friends to lunch, and we spent our time

in speculating as to the histories, relationships, and plans of the groups around us.

Then the second tender arrived with more passengers, and more letters and telegrams ; the luggage was taken on board ; the bell sounded, warning all visitors to be ready to leave the ship ; farewells were being said on every side ; and after a few last handshakings, up went the gangway, and we felt that the voyage had begun. The great screw began to strike the water, the little tender pushing the big ship with her bows till the two swung round together. Then we began to move slowly southward ; the two ships parted, and the distance grew greater and greater, hats and handkerchiefs waving incessantly all the time, till the tender became a mere speck, and finally disappeared from view.

The last link was severed, and the difficulty at first was to know what to do, and how to adapt oneself to surroundings which were so novel and so circumscribed.

Steaming peacefully down Southampton Water, we turned westward into the Solent, while the sun was setting in a glorious sky, and passing soon afterwards a big North German Lloyd homeward bound, we were level with the Needles at about five

o'clock, just as it was getting dusk and the moon was rising.

Very grand did the Needles look in the dim light, like great watch-dogs guarding the approach to England ; and long after we had left them behind, we could distinguish the lighthouse lights, and those of Hurst Castle on the mainland.

Dinner was at six o'clock, and there was a large attendance, for our troubles had not yet begun. Next to me on my right was the new Protector of Immigrants in Trinidad, Commander C——, who had just been appointed, and was going out to take up his duties for the first time. A retired naval commander, and well up in the Indian dialects, he seemed singularly well fitted for the post. I had an interesting conversation with him about the Coolie immigration. After the abolition of slavery in the West Indian Islands, the negroes could not be got to work regularly, and the plantations were becoming neglected, and the owners in many cases ruined. It was then that a supply of Indian coolies was suggested, and, after some opposition, the experiment was tried, the first ship landing with 219 of them in May 1845. Their accommodation is now under the strictest surveillance at the hands of the Government,

hospitals having to be supplied on the plantations, and wages, lodgings, etc., being subject to Government control. The coolies are bound for a fixed period, after which they may set up for themselves if their conduct has been satisfactory, and they are allowed a certain sum to enable them to return to their own country if they desire to do so. In nearly all cases they prefer to go back to India, when they have "made their pile."

After a brilliant moonlight night we woke up next morning to find the ship had begun to roll, although the weather was fine, and I spent the greater part of the day in my bunk in a state of abject despair. Towards evening matters improved, and I managed to reach the upper deck, where I fell in with an ex-Senator of the United States of Colombia, and paced up and down the deck with him for some time discussing many interesting questions, until warned to again seek temporary refuge below. The Venezuelan boundary dispute was then at its height, and it was interesting to hear his opinion that the United States had interfered quite unwarrantably, that their principal motive was spite against England, and that the South American Republics generally did not believe in their friendship, and could do very well without it.

Since that time we have happily learnt that good may come out of evil, through the signing of the Arbitration Treaty between the two countries in January 1897.

In the night we rolled heavily again, and some big seas struck the ship, but the next day, Friday, the weather cleared, and people began to come out of their holes. The scene on deck was quite a lively one, new faces constantly appearing from below. In the morning we passed a fine sailing ship which attracted great attention, and a little stir of excitement was caused by a shoal of porpoises racing the steamer. At night the moon was again brilliant, white fleecy clouds drifting rapidly across it, whilst gleams of light crept over the surface of the sea, and lit up the foam round the ship's sides as she cut through the water.

On Saturday the sea was like glass, and the sun had gained considerably in strength. The quarter-masters were busy putting up the awning, and the time-honoured game of "bull" made its appearance on the promenade deck. This game, which is familiar to all ocean travellers, consists in throwing leaden weights on to a board marked in squares with numbers, and it requires some skill when the ship

is rolling. After many hours it is apt to grow monotonous.

We were now beginning to know something of each other. Amongst the passengers with whom I became acquainted were a young Oxford graduate who was going out to be ordained in Trinidad, a barrister on his way to Demerara, whose intention was to start a practice in Georgetown, and a young doctor bound for Peru, to attend the English colony at Lima. All these were men of the right sort, and the time passed pleasantly enough if uneventfully. The phosphorescence in the water at night was beginning to be very beautiful, and we could stand for hours leaning over the stern of the ship watching the long white line which we left behind us, turned by the phosphorus to a delicate mauve tint. Service was held in the saloon at half-past ten on Sunday morning, and was read by the Captain throughout, from the head of the centre table. It was a novel and interesting ceremony to any one unaccustomed to life at sea. The passengers were assembled on one side of the saloon, and the crew, in their uniform, drawn up in a long line on the other. The wind was freshening considerably, and some heavy lurches brought the sublime very near

to the ridiculous, by upsetting the balance of the choir and congregation.

We had now been five days at sea, and were expecting to pass the Azores between eleven and twelve, but the weather had become so thick that we failed to obtain the faintest glimpse of them, much to every one's disappointment.

On Monday morning it cleared again, but we had evidently been on the edge of a storm, for we now encountered a heavy ground swell and rolled tremendously. We were out of winter by this time, and ulsters and overcoats had disappeared. The sun had again greatly increased its power. An impromptu concert came to an abrupt conclusion, as the performers were precipitated violently into the banisters or the piano, and had to abandon the attempt. The sun went down in truly tropical fashion, and at eleven o'clock the moon rose magnificently from a heavy bank of storm clouds.

At this stage of the voyage it was an interesting occupation to study the different types among the passengers. There was the man who told stories too good to be true, and who was genuinely hurt if their accuracy were doubted; and the cheery individual who threw cold water

on other people's enjoyment, by saying this was nothing to what he had seen somewhere else. There was the showman too, who was always to the fore whenever any new phenomenon appeared—a smooth-faced grey-headed old gentleman with mild and courteous ways; and the commercial traveller with a strong belief in himself, but deficient in the faculty of leaving other people alone. Then again, there was the gambler seeking stealthily for victims through the medium of “poker,” and the misanthropist who spent all his time in endeavouring to avoid an encounter with any of his fellow-creatures. Conspicuous among the ladies was the stout and queenly female, who sought to establish herself as leader of fashion on board, sweeping the deck like a true duchess, and expecting the more insignificant passengers to devote their time to her amusement. There was also the middle-aged damsel of forty years “odd,” who wore a sailor hat and was kittenish in her ways; and the racy young maiden who had travelled everywhere, and was always ready to bet, gamble, or flirt. This latter type is apt to be a serious nuisance on board ship where space is circumscribed.

By the time one has been five or six days at

sea, a regular Society with a big "S" has usually developed itself. It is so long since anyone has seen the outer world, that all the topics of conversation are about the life on board, and one soon begins to feel as though one had never known any other world than the promenade deck, the music-room, and the saloon. Anybody who has seen a map of the world knows that two-thirds of its whole surface is covered by water, but it is another thing to *realise* it. The realisation gives one an overwhelming sense of the littleness of the human animal.

We rose at six o'clock every morning and took a sea-bath, sometimes getting a lovely view of the sunrise through the port-hole, and drinking in the fresh clear air as it blew straight off the sea, with nothing within thousands of miles to contaminate it. A small party of us used then to assemble in our pyjamas for early tea or coffee in the fore saloon, and sit gossiping till past eight o'clock, when we dressed, and went up on deck to walk a brisk mile before nine o'clock breakfast.

On the Tuesday we encountered a head wind, which caused the ship to pitch instead of rolling, and this little variation was enough to upset the equilibrium of some of us who imagined we had

found our sea legs, and were never going to lose them again. Dinner began with a simultaneous collapse of all the bottles of wine, and ended with many gaps in the ranks. Some excitement was caused in the afternoon by the appearance of two or three whales within three or four hundred yards of the ship. We could see them spouting very distinctly, and now and again could discern a black object on the surface of the water. The showman was immediately to the front.

Next day the wind had dropped, but a heavy ground swell caused the ship to roll to an angle of about thirty-eight degrees. In another twenty-four hours we were in the tropics—really in the tropics! The realisation of dreams that had once seemed so visionary had a strange fascination, such as I remember feeling on one previous occasion, viz., on first seeing Rome. Everything around us seemed to bear out the truth. The swell had subsided during the night, and the colour of the sea was a beautiful deep blue, reflecting the azure sky. As the afternoon wore on I went right forward into the bows of the steamer, and stood there watching for the first glimpse of a flying-fish. The whole scene was enchanting, with the good ship

ploughing her way across the azure sea, and the sun going down in a mass of gold on the far horizon. As its rim dipped, the colour of the water turned gradually to a rosy pink, and whilst I stood gazing at the picture before me there was a flash on the surface near the bows of the steamer, and a flying-fish went skimming over the water for about twenty or thirty yards. In the course of the next quarter of an hour I counted four or five of them, frightened by the noise of the steamer, and hurrying away to a safe distance. From time to time masses of orange-coloured sea-weed floated past us, for we were now in the famous Sargasso Sea between the Gulf Stream and the Equatorial current. This sea-weed grows and expands on the surface of the water, and forms a habitation for innumerable crabs of a species found in no other place. Some of us endeavoured to land specimens of it, with twisted wire attached to the end of a piece of string, but without success. Every one was now in tropical attire, and with cricket and other games in full swing, the time passed very pleasantly.

The next day, Friday, we were in the regular trade winds, and were running before a fresh north-easterly breeze, the deep blue of the sea being dotted with

little white horses. After this there was little change, with the exception of some heavy tropical showers which passed over us from time to time. I was surprised at first to see masses of cloud on the horizon, and still more so at the downpour of rain which followed, for I had imagined such storms to be quite rare occurrences in the dry season. This impression was very quickly removed.

Saturday was a regular gala day, the programme consisting of sports in the afternoon and a concert in the evening, including musical tableaux and recitations. The sports went off with great spirit, and consisted of obstacle races, tugs-of-war, cock-fighting, potato races, needle-and-thread races, etc., etc., all the passengers combining in the most patriotic fashion to produce a collection of prizes, which were given away by the oldest lady on the ship. A hearty vote of thanks to the captain ended the day.

Sunday, the last day, was peaceful and quiet. We were all conscious of a strange medley of feelings. Excitement at the thought of sighting land next day was mingled with a feeling of sadness that friendships which were being rapidly formed must be cut short, perhaps for ever, and that our little

world must be dissolved, and drop so soon "into the shadowy gulf of bygone things."

After service in the morning, most of the day was spent in talking in little groups on deck, and this was carried on into the small hours of the morning, when we turned in for the night—myself for the last time on board the good ship *Don*.

CHAPTER II.

BARBADOS.

NEXT morning I was on deck soon after three o'clock. It was then quite dark, but a clear, star-light night, and there, on our starboard bow, were the lighthouse lights of Barbados. It seemed strange, after being at sea for twelve days and nights without a glimpse of land, that we should have hit off the exact spot! I believe this is a feeling common to most people when they find themselves for the first time at the end of a long voyage. We had slowed down, so as not to reach Carlisle Bay before daylight. The sea was as smooth as glass, and there seemed to be a quiver of expectation in the air as we moved lazily along. Looking up at the stars again, I saw with intense interest, not far above the horizon, the "Southern Cross." This constellation, of which one hears and reads so often,

has disappointed many. To me it was sufficient to feel that *there it was*—the same that Columbus saw, and Sir Francis Drake, and all the explorers and heroes of old times! In shape it is an almost perfect cross, composed of four stars. The symmetry is, however, somewhat spoiled by one arm being shorter than the other.

When I came up on deck again at about five o'clock, a long, low strip of land was visible in the dim light, gradually deepening in colour as the dawn approached. We were now actually steaming along the coast, having left the easternmost point behind us. Soon after six, our little party assembled in the fore saloon for the last time, soon to be separated by many thousands of miles, one going to Peru, another to Demerara, others, again, to Guatemala, Mexico, and California, and other distant lands.

We had been sipping our tea and talking for some little time, when we were suddenly startled by the firing of the gun, and hurrying on deck, found ourselves at anchor in the roadstead of Carlisle Bay. This gun is always fired as a signal to the boatmen that they may come alongside, and is followed by a desperate struggle. The scene was

so novel and strange, that it was difficult to say what struck one most. There before us lay the Island of Barbados, glimmering in the sun, a long low strip of land, gorgeously green, with houses which had bright red roofs and no chimneys, and quaint, stiff-looking trees, standing out like sky-signs against the horizon. The twin cupolas of the Bridgetown Club, "glittering but motionless" (to quote the somewhat mystical language of the *Barbados Bulletin*), were conspicuous above the roofs of the houses on one side, while the square towers of the Cathedral could be seen on the left. The brilliancy of the colouring, the absence of chimneys, and the peculiar stiff appearance of the trees, combined to give to the picture before us a curiously wooden aspect, and suggested a landscape out of a child's Noah's ark. At the same time, the eye is fascinated with the intense blueness of the water, and the exquisite rainbow tints in the shallows all along the shore. The bay was full of shipping, and the whole scene was exceedingly bright and gay. Within a few hundred yards of us were the three intercolonial steamers at anchor, waiting to take on passengers to Trinidad, Demerara, and the northern islands. H.M.S. *Cordelia* lay about a quarter

B

of a mile away, looking as if she were almost within a stone's throw, and there were from twenty to thirty sailing vessels of different rigs at anchor in the roadstead. In a few minutes, the bay was alive with boats rowed by brawny-looking negroes in slouched hats and calico shirts and trousers, all pulling lustily towards us. They swarmed round the steamer like flies round a horse's head, the boatmen shouting and gesticulating wildly to the passengers on deck. These were soon joined by a fleet of little copper-coloured negro boys, in canoes made of matchwood, who dived after silver coins and brought them to the surface with wonderful rapidity, their woolly heads looking, if anything, drier than before the immersion. "Me dive under de ship and come up on de nex side for sixpence, sar," was one of the propositions I heard, and what is more it was done. Passengers are nearly torn to pieces in the struggle for fares, and very frequently reach the shore *minus* their baggage, which arrives in other boats. Occasionally it is dropped into the sea.

Luckily a boat had been sent to meet me, so I escaped being torn to pieces by rival claimants. We were about a quarter of a mile from the shore, and in a few moments I found myself steering two lusty

negroes across Carlisle Bay in the broiling sun, having been requested, or rather directed, to take the helm. Not understanding half what was said to me, and being very misty as to where the landing-stage was, I felt not a little bewildered ; but we eventually rounded a breakwater and came alongside a stone quay, which I guessed to be our destination by the swarms of negroes and negresses standing about in groups.

The West Indian negro has no definite language of his own. Having been amongst Europeans for so many generations, he has forgotten his original tongue and speaks a pigeon English which is not at all easy to follow at first. The tone of the voice never changes, the long words are generally decapitated or have their tails cut off, and all the smaller parts of speech are left out. He is also fond of using long words, and makes the drollest mistakes possible, and the strange monotone in which he speaks sounds as if the sentences were being turned out from a machine by the yard, instead of being spoken by a human animal.

On landing I found myself in the midst of a perfect pandemonium, negroes with grotesque faces screeching and yelling on every side of me, while there was scarcely a white face to be seen. One's first impulse is

to treat the whole thing as an enormous joke, so droll do their expressions and gestures appear. After a time, however, finding myself the centre of a group of cabmen, porters, loafers, and guides, all addressing me at the same time in strident voices, I began to lose patience, and was very glad to get my baggage through the Customs, and jump into one of the vehicles which were waiting on the quay. These are like small victorias with hoods for protection from the sun, and the better ones are very comfortable, whilst others looked on the verge of breaking up. We drove to the Ice-house in the centre of the town (famous for flying-fish and West Indian cocktails), where I was to spend the first night before moving to Harrison College, which, through the kindness of the masters, was my headquarters during my visit to the islands. The streets were densely packed, black women filing past us in twos and threes dressed in white calico, with handkerchiefs tied round their heads, and carrying all manner of produce on the top of their skulls. Most of them had wooden trays on which were to be seen bananas, sugar-cane stalks, bottles, and other merchandise, including massive umbrellas. Their faces are almost always repulsive, the thick lips and wide nostrils being fatal to European ideas of beauty,

but the figure and carriage are splendid. They go forward with a fine swinging walk, throwing their heads backward and holding themselves very erect. This characteristic is so striking, that it almost causes one to forget the coarseness of the features. The balancing of the heavy weights on the head has much to do with their dignified bearing, but they are naturally well-proportioned. The hardest work seems to be done by the women, for the male negro does not care for sustained labour, but prefers to pick up odd jobs, and to live on the proceeds as long as he can. Consequently the streets of Bridgetown are almost intolerable on mail days. In addition to the crowds on foot, mule drays from the sugar plantations come dashing round corners at the pace of a fire-engine, and there appears to be no rule of the road whatsoever. If there is one, it is more honoured in the breach than in the observance. We found ourselves continually blocked by drays, carriages, or donkey carts, the black drivers shouting and yelling at their horses or at one another in no measured terms, and lashing wildly with their whips, apparently for the mere satisfaction of making a noise. After the business-like aspect of a London crowd, the impression conveyed was that of confusion

and muddle, but gradually I began to realise that a great deal of business was being carried on in their own way. The drays, some filled with sugar-cane stalks, some with barrels of rum or hogsheads of sugar, and the piles of bananas and other fruit on the heads of the women, all told of a brisk trade. And yet the prospect for the future in Barbados is anything but a bright one. The wealthy sugar planters of the last century, with their lavish hospitality, are altogether a thing of the past. The abolition of the slave trade was the first blow. Perhaps this has never been felt in Barbados to the same extent as in other islands, because labour is plentiful. At the same time, the West Indian negro is not, as I have said, considered to be a success as a labourer on the plantations, though some planters have been fairly successful. The black population in Barbados already amounts to 180,000 out of a total of 200,000, and it is increasing every year by leaps and bounds. Nor will anything induce the Barbadian negro to emigrate to other islands, or if he does he is very soon back again. The difficulty in Barbados is therefore a double one, affecting both the planter and the negro population. In most of the West Indian Islands fruit is so plentiful that any serious distress is impossible, but

Barbados, which is cultivated from end to end, is more like an English county where everything must be worked for, and what will eventually become of the surplus population is a problem not easy to be solved. Then, again, the sugar bounties in Europe are enabling the beet sugar to compete successfully with the cane sugar, which is vastly superior, and thus crippling the planters themselves. In most of the other islands coffee and cocoa are taking its place, but the formation of the soil in Barbados does not allow of their being cultivated. Both require plenty of shade, whereas the interior of the island consists of bare green hills and hard white coral roads, practically every vestige of the old forests having disappeared, so much so that when a Barbadian who has not visited the other islands is asked if the vegetation in the West Indies is not very beautiful, his answer is that he has heard so, but cannot speak from experience.

The precarious state of the sugar industry in Barbados has since given rise to an agitation which has compelled the home Government to make a move. A special Commission has visited the islands, and presented a full report. Acting on its suggestions, the Government has now made

a grant to Barbados for the purpose of establishing central factories, and has also contracted with a private firm for a new service of quick steamers, both with the other islands and with England. After a full investigation, the Commissioners came to the conclusion that there were many local causes for the decline of the industry, and that the difficulties would not be overcome by creating a bounty system. The principal alteration will be the gradual disappearance of local machinery, and a consequent gain in economy of production. There will not only be less machinery, but the new factories, by their improved methods, will save much waste of material. It is impossible to foresee at present what the results will be. Old planters refuse to admit that anything but a countervailing duty will give West Indian sugar a chance. But the outlook is now more hopeful. Efforts are also to be made to transfer a large portion of the black population to British Guiana, where there are large tracts still uncultivated, and where labour is wanted.

The glare on the white roads is so intense, that Bridgetown has the reputation of being the hottest town in the West Indies, not even excluding Port of Spain, Trinidad. It is perplexing at first to

find that with a double Teraï hat and a white sun umbrella one is still dazzled by the sun. The glare, however, comes by reflection from below, and the only protection is a pair of dark blue spectacles.

The houses, most of which have two storeys, are built of wood, and generally painted white, and their jalousie shutters and little balconies and arcades, which are more often pink or bright green, give a very picturesque aspect to the streets. Black policemen, in white duck with white helmets, and tram-drivers and conductors in similar costume, contribute to the novelty of the scene.

At the Ice-house we had a delicious breakfast, consisting of fried flying-fish, cutlets, sweet potatoes, and yams. This was my first experience of a West Indian meal, though one of our passengers expected we should have the fruits on board ship as soon as we were in the tropics. The flying-fish was beautifully hot, crisp, and tender, very like sole in taste. It is a dish which becomes very familiar before one has been in the West Indies long.

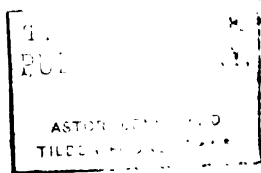
The balcony of the Ice-house commands a splendid view of the traffic of Bridgetown, and gives every advantage for the ear to take in the tumult of noises which accompany it. The compactness of the

town, the low-storied houses, and the swarm of faces moving incessantly to and fro in the streets, suggest a species of human ant's nest. This impression is all the stronger, because, as seen from the balcony, the people appear to crawl rather than walk, the majority having nothing on their feet, and every noise being drowned by the babel of voices. They seem to be incessantly meeting acquaintances, and if they do not do this, they talk loudly and excitedly to themselves, or sing mournful dirges as they move along. When not singing, they are generally going over some quarrel with a neighbour word for word. Two negresses will meet and shake hands languidly, without appearing to even look in one another's faces, and at the same time will continue their conversation until quite out of hearing. This has a very quaint effect, which is extremely difficult to convey or reproduce, but it is essentially characteristic of the race.

After we had had a rest, four of us hired a buggy and went for a drive round the suburbs of Bridgetown and past the Savannah to Hastings, returning by the sea-coast. This drive I shall always remember as one of exceptional interest. The other islands had more beautiful scenery awaiting us, but on



CACTUS PLANTS, BARBADOS.



first landing from England every object is strange and new, and the whole drive was a series of surprises.

We had not gone far before we came upon a sugar-cane field, which resembles a wheat-field on a gigantic scale, with tall, sword-like grass of a brilliant green colour. The stalk forms the cane, from which the juice is crushed, the blade being used for fuel. The stately stems, waving in the wind and glistening in the strong sunlight, looked most impressive, more especially when we thought of their great history, and the fierce controversies raging over them at the present day. But of this more hereafter.

A little farther on we passed cacti in the gardens of the houses, growing to a height of from twenty to thirty feet, then prickly aloes, and then a tall shrub with long, ribbon-like fronds or bracts, not unlike an immense hart's-tongue fern. We were all greatly struck with its stately beauty, and our interest was increased when we heard that this was the banana plant. On closer inspection, we could see the clusters of bananas growing on the stalk, underneath the spreading fronds. Plantains, of which we saw several presently, are so like bananas that it requires a practised eye to

distinguish them. The only difference is that the banana has purple spots on the stem, and its fronds are wholly green, while the plantain has a green stem and its fronds are purple on the inside. The fruit of the plantain is cooked as a vegetable, while the banana is eaten fresh, but I never could detect much difference in the taste. Both fruits are made into a meal which is much patronised by the negro population. Bananas are sold in Barbados at the rate of about six for a penny. The average height of the shrub is said to be about eight feet, but under favourable circumstances it reaches twelve feet, or even fifteen.

Every garden we passed was profuse in various species of crotons—beautiful rich-coloured grasses, crimson, green, orange, and yellow, which produced a perfect blaze of colour. Amongst the larger trees was the *lignum vitæ*, covered with bunches of deep-blue blossom in the form of lilac; coralita hanging in festoons of mauve or purple; and hybiscus, with deep-red blossoms like azaleas, but growing singly on the stalk. Cabbage palms, with bulbous-looking stems, spread their great fronds over our heads, and cocoa-nut palms growing at all kinds of angles from the ground. Presently we passed under a

tree with large brown pods about a foot long hanging from the branches, and our driver stopped to break off one of these and hand it to us. This was the "flamboyant," which at certain seasons bursts out into bunches of scarlet blossoms. Here, on our left, was another tree full of smaller pods, which made a curious rattling sound as the wind stirred the branches. From this sound the tree derives its name of "shack - shack," while some irreverently call it the "woman's tongue." Farther on, again, were some tall, feathery-looking trees, like magnified asparagus, which I recognised as my old friends as seen from the steamer standing out against the sky - line. These were casuarinas, called in St Lucia "whispering trees," from the soft and subdued sound made by the wind amongst the branches. Many others, too, we saw, such as mahoganys, and sandboxes with their curious cones and large vine-like leaves, and frangipanis with leafless branches and tufts of red and white blossom sprouting at the end of them. Now and again we came upon masses of purple bougainvilleas growing in clusters in the gardens, while poinsettias flourished everywhere in the open air.

The Savannah which we now came to is an open

common, with grass of a coarser type and browner tint than our English meadow grass. It is a fine piece of ground, and is practically the only available spot for riding in Barbados. Round it are ranged the various barracks belonging to the garrison of the island. The fine belt of trees surrounding the Savannah has since been completely destroyed by the hurricane of September 1898.

A few minutes' drive now brought us to Hastings, on the leeward coast, about two miles east of Bridgetown. Here, for the first time, was the tropical beach! How often, from childhood, I had tried to picture it from Kingsley's vivid descriptions or the histories of the early explorers. There were the cocoa-nut palms, with clusters of green cocoa-nuts, growing all along the sea-line out of the soft, white sand, with beautiful rainbow colours in the water as it moved lazily backwards and forwards, glittering in the brilliant sunlight. Interspersed with the palms were bushes of sea-grape, a shrub with colossal leaves resembling magnified geranium leaves delicately streaked with red. And so we drove back into Bridgetown, feeling we had "seen strange things to-day."

The Barbadians prefer their windward coast, which is wild and rocky, and not unlike part of the coast of North Wales, with a fresh breeze always blowing off the sea. But for the stranger the leeward coast has the greatest charm, and of the beautiful spots which it possesses there is none to equal Freshwater Bay. We drove down one afternoon to this exquisite spot to join a small gathering for an afternoon bathe. The road follows the coast for about three miles in a gradual ascent till the level is about two hundred feet above the sea, the land sloping up to the right in a kind of moorland, till it ends in a coral ridge at a height of some four or five hundred feet. Here we came to a deep ravine, down which we had to climb through a dense glade of manchioneal trees, from the midst of which we emerged quite suddenly on the coral sand.

These trees are of the same type as the English beech or lime, the leaves being very similar to those of the lime tree, but they contain a juice which blisters the face if it comes into contact with the skin. The fruit resembles a small apple in appearance, and also in its scent, which is exceedingly strong, but woe betide the man who is taken in by it! Some English sailors are said to have fallen into the trap a few years

ago, and their lips and throats were so blistered that they barely recovered from the effects. Emerging suddenly from the road, one almost fancies oneself in fairyland, with the masses of green foliage and the soft warm sand under foot, and beyond the blue lazy sea. Under the branches of the manchineel trees has been placed a picturesque little bathing-hut, but the shelter of the trees themselves is generally sufficient. The sensation of basking in the tropical sun after a dip in the cool water is delicious, but it is also like the broad way that leadeth to destruction. No one who has not experienced it can quite imagine the maddening irritation which follows a few hours afterwards. After a long exposure it becomes intolerable to wear any clothes on one's back.

There is very little difference in the tides here, partly owing to a steep bank of sand, and one is able to plunge into deep water at once. About two miles out to sea a coral reef forms a belt round the coast, and beyond this reef sharks have seldom been known to venture. There is, however, another evil-minded fish called the "barracouta," belonging to the perch tribe, which has no objection to shallow water. Neither has it any compunction about removing a portion of the human leg. But it is only seen

occasionally, and personally I never made its acquaintance.

We drove afterwards to the house of Mr H——, a resident in Bridgetown, who has never seen England yet, and is a Barbadian to the backbone. Here we were regaled with cocktails in true West Indian fashion. These cocktails consist of whisky, rum, or gin, mixed with angostura bitters, lime juice, and sugar, and stirred into a froth with "swizzle sticks." The result is a tempting and refreshing, but somewhat insidious, not to say mischievous beverage, which is an excellent pick-me-up to an enervated West Indian constitution, but is apt to rob the unwary stranger of some of that judgment and reserve which he usually possesses. On many subsequent occasions the same programme was repeated, and I shall always have pleasing recollections of the unostentatious, yet generous and warm-hearted hospitality which I received at the hands of Mr and Mrs H——. I can only say that it was typical of the kindness which I met with at the hands of all Barbadians with whom I came in contact. Mr H—— is the owner of a large store in Bridgetown. I may mention here that in West Indian towns small shops, such as one sees in

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an English country town, scarcely exist, and the merchants and storekeepers have largely taken the place of the old planters as the native aristocracy of the island, though there are a few influential planters still remaining. If the price of sugar continues to fall, the merchants must of course feel it also. At present they have every appearance of prosperity.

I found that English people were very ready to criticise the Barbadians unfavourably. So far as I could see, their principal shortcomings are these: they entertain a very high opinion of Barbados, and they are very ready to resent any slight upon it. Possibly they are a little inclined to imagine one where none was intended, but this is sometimes due to want of tact in those who offend.

Looking back on the history of the island, one can scarcely wonder that the "Bims," as they are familiarly termed, should be thoroughly proud of it. Of all our West Indian possessions, it is the only one that has never been in the hands of an enemy. It was first colonised by the English in 1625, after the Spaniards had exterminated the Carib population, and it has passed unscathed through all the fierce struggles with Dutch, Spaniards, and French alike,

for which the West Indies have been the principal arena for well-nigh three hundred years. After the execution of King Charles I. the Barbadians defied Cromwell for three years, and when they finally surrendered to Sir John Ayscue, who had been sent with a fleet to crush them, the terms of the treaty were so lenient that they very justly boasted of having dictated terms to the Commonwealth. No doubt if Cromwell could himself have appeared on the scene matters would have been very different, but the fact remains nevertheless. Thirteen years later, during the Dutch war, the island was attacked by the great general De Ruyter with fourteen ships, the bombardment lasting from ten in the morning till three in the afternoon. By that time De Ruyter's ship was so damaged that he was obliged to give up the attempt. This was the only serious attack made upon the island by a foreign fleet, though the excitement was intense during the second great struggle which raged all over the West Indies in the middle of the eighteenth century, and Rodney sailed from Barbados in 1761 to fight that great sea fight which turned the scale in our favour. Barbados again showed her loyalty while the struggle with the American colonies was in progress only a few years

later. Since then her chief troubles and anxieties have been connected with the abolition of slavery.

This little glimpse of what has passed during the last three hundred years should suffice to show that the islanders are quite justly proud of their "Little England," as it is often called. People going out to live in Barbados will naturally find that they have not very many interests in common with the Barbadians at first ; but those who shrink into themselves, and will not make the best of altered surroundings, will assuredly find that they have converted into enemies people who were best fitted to be the staunchest of friends. My advice to them is : Bring no false pride with you, and be careful not to injure thoughtlessly the susceptibilities of others. Then you will find everywhere kindness, sympathy, and consideration.

Harrison College, at which I was staying, is one of the principal schools in the West Indies. There are about two hundred boys, the large majority being day-boarders, but a certain number coming from the neighbouring islands. There is an efficient staff of masters, most of them University men who have taken honours at Oxford or Cambridge. A first-class education is given, and many boys go to

England afterwards and obtain scholarships at the two universities. There is another school in the interior, known as the Lodge School, which is considerably smaller, but which has also a good staff of masters who have come out from England and have taken honour degrees. Quite close to Harrison College, in its own grounds stands Queen's College, the new High School for girls, which promises to be a brilliant success. In Barbados the Education Board receive £15,000 annually from the public revenue, but much of this is expended on Elementary Schools, which are very much less efficient.

My friends were anxious that I should see and appreciate the north-east or windward coast of Barbados, and accordingly we set out one day for a thirteen miles drive to the Lodge School, which stands on high ground in the interior, and from thence, after being hospitably entertained, we went on next day to Bathsheba.

The drive to the Lodge could not by any stretch of imagination be called beautiful, or even particularly interesting. The trade wind had dropped almost to a calm, and the day was damp and sultry as we covered mile after mile of white coral roads, the surface of which was converted into a paste

by the drenching rain. Nothing was to be seen but cane-fields in front and behind one, to the right and to the left, with no scarcity of negro huts made of wood or wattles, and now and then the chimneys of sugar usines attached to the estates. From time to time mule drays came dashing down the hills at a furious pace, drawn by six mules, loaded with the cane stalks or chaff, and driven by negroes in broad-brimmed felt hats, who were yelling and slashing with their whips like maniacs.

At the Lodge School a cricket match was being played against Harrison College, some of the boys being black or coloured. One of these I heard was to go up to the University, and was likely "to get his blue." I may mention that the black population take the keenest interest in cricket, and are remarkably sportsmanlike, and impartial in their appreciation of good play. On another occasion I watched the semi-final tie of the championship, played on the Wanderers cricket-ground at Bridgetown, between the Wanderers and Spartans, the principal white and black clubs in the island. This corresponds in Barbados to a County championship, or Gentlemen and Players match, and all ranks, professions, and colours were well represented among the spec-

tators. The scene was a bright and interesting one, with the rows of black faces opposite, and the little wooden cabins beyond. Behind these again were the green hills, with houses dotted about them in the far distance, and tall palms standing out against the sky.

An exciting struggle ended in the Wanderers just winning by two wickets, this practically deciding the championship. The blacks were present in swarms, and I expected that they would show their disapprobation; but to my surprise, directly the winning hit was made, they went nearly off their heads with delight. They made a wild rush for the pavilion, jumping and skipping like goats, while the air was full of hats of all shapes and sizes, which they hurled to the skies. The children or piccaninnies rolled over on the ground, turned somersaults and catherine wheels, and the whole crowd seemed to be transported with delight. The players were surrounded, and had great difficulty in reaching the pavilion, one being cut off and carried in.

After watching the cricket for a time at the Lodge, we set out to walk to Codrington College, a picturesque grey building about a mile distant. Codrington is the university of Barbados, as

Harrison College is its public school. It has a strikingly classical appearance, standing in a secluded spot amidst beautiful surroundings, and approached by a fine avenue of mahogany trees. Beyond, in the far distance, is the blue sea, fringed with a line of white surf. Codrington College, which is nearly two hundred years old, and derives its income from sugar estates, is affiliated to Durham University. It has unhappily had to be recently closed, owing to the deplorable condition of the sugar trade. We had a refreshing bathe in the swimming-bath attached to the College, the walls of which are inscribed with a remarkable selection of texts and mottoes.

The next day we continued our journey to Bathsheba. Two hours walking through cane-fields and along a baking road brought us suddenly to the end of the table-land. We were standing at the extreme edge of a long line of lofty limestone cliffs, and below was a beautiful under-cliff, very like those which are to be seen at Ventnor and in South Devon. In fact, it would have been easy to imagine oneself on the Devonshire coast, only the scenery was wilder here, and around us were palms, bread-fruit trees, mangoes, flamboyants, and

bushes of sea-grape, to remind us that we were in a tropical zone.

We made our way down the edge of the cliff, over rocks and through long grass and bushes, noticing new species of tropical flowers at every turn, till we reached the coast, and walked along the primitive little railway to Bathsheba. The scene is indeed wild and grand, with the big waves rolling in amongst masses of volcanic rock, like honeycombs with their bases washed by the waves till they resemble gigantic mushrooms. Finally the bases are worn completely away by the water incessantly seething round them, and only a flat ledge of rock remains, like a pebble which has been cut and polished. The little railway runs for some miles along the rocky coast, and then, turning inland, crosses the island to Bridgetown. It very much resembles the light railways which have sprung up in the west of Ireland of recent years. Three or four carriages like tramcars are drawn by a diminutive engine, which has a great idea of its own importance, puffing and whistling in a manner quite beyond its size, the black drivers showing their never-failing delight in noise.

From Bathsheba we made an expedition to

Turner's Hall Wood, the only remnant of forest which is left in the island. Taking the train as far as St Andrews, the terminus on the windward side, we steamed along the coast amongst the sandbanks, with the surf rolling in on one side, and strange peaked limestone hills and cliffs marking the edge of the hilly district on the other. At St Andrews we hailed a little black boy about thirteen years of age, and entrusted him with a large Huntley & Palmer's tin containing provisions. This he placed on the top of his head, and my hand-camera, full of photographic plates, on the top of the tin. He then led the way gaily, and trudged along for six miles, never using his arms to balance the weight on his head, and never showing any signs of fatigue.

We climbed from the sea-shore to a height of about eight hundred feet, into the heart of the district which goes by the name of Scotland. It is all rugged and broken ground here, with long ridges and steep slopes or precipices, culminating here and there in jagged peaks of white limestone. Except at Turner's Hall Wood itself, there is scarcely a tree visible in the whole panorama before one. The little huts of the negroes are to be seen

dotted about along the ridges, built generally of wattles, the roofs being thatched with palm leaves, and in the far distance is a long white line of surf, which gradually decreases as the eye travels towards the sheltered side of the island. The brilliancy of the colouring, and the extreme clearness of the air, produce the effect of a painting on canvas, so vividly is every distant object seen. The wood itself lies in a deep hollow, and is in striking contrast to the barren terraces of limestone which surround it. In the centre, the palms and tree-ferns are very beautiful, growing almost as they do in Jamaica. Monkeys are often to be seen there, and parrots are not unknown.

We made our way through the wood to Boiling Spring, a little pool in a deep hollow, through which bubbles of carburetted hydrogen find their way to the surface. A white peasant woman brought a tin can with two chimneys which she placed over the spot. She then applied a match to the top of the chimney, and the result was an excellent gas-stove. We were told that neighbouring cottagers do most of their cooking in this way. The word "cottagers" has a European sound, and I use it expressly because in this part of the island there is a

white peasantry, descended from convicts transported by Cromwell two hundred years ago. Prisoners captured at the siege of Drogheda, and again at the battle of Worcester, were shipped off in thousands to Barbados. More followed after Sedgemoor, and many Devonshire names are still found amongst them. Later on the planters bought convicts from Newgate and Bridewell prisons.

It is quite a refreshing sight to see the white faces and European features, many of them having very handsome profiles, with a grace and refinement which is unusual in a peasant class. Appearances are, however, deceptive, and I hear that as a race they are not high in the social scale, their moral and physical standard being low. Frequent inter-marriages have caused the race to deteriorate. The Barbadians call them "red legs," but no one could tell me the origin of the name. Some think it dates from Cromwell's time, and was the name given to the peasants by the English settlers in Ireland because they wore kilts.

We sat down to eat our lunch in a shady place, whereupon a dozen negroes of various ages and sizes made a little group, three yards off, and proceeded to contemplate us as if we were there for

the purpose. If we had been waxworks, or statues in a museum, they could not have stared at us with more utter indifference to our feelings. When a white man does stare he generally looks a little shame-faced about it, but the Barbadian negro is entirely devoid of any feeling of the kind. He merely thinks there is something to amuse him, and will come and deliberately take his stand just in front of you, and gaze at you until his curiosity is satisfied. Mr Froude relates how on one occasion he took out his sketch-book and quietly began to sketch the offenders, an experiment which was instantly successful.

Emancipation does not seem to have improved the character and disposition of the negro. As a slave, given a good master, he was faithful and affectionate, like a favourite dog; sometimes rather fond of pilfering in a small way, more from ignorance and want of training than from any real criminal instinct, but on the whole a faithful servant. As a free man he has acquired an exaggerated impression of his own importance, while with few exceptions he is like a child in intellect. The consequence is that he is ridiculously vain and often arrogant in his manner, partly because he is conscious of his real

inferiority, and knows that the white man knows it. This tends to make him unnecessarily self-assertive.

The great mistake in the emancipation of the slaves was in making them free men before they knew what freedom meant. The negroes had never seen white men working on the plantations, and directly they heard that they were free, they supposed that they would never have to do any hard work, but that they would be able to keep their homes as before without working to support them. The work of emancipation ought to have been carried out very gradually and carefully, but such a wave of sentiment swept over England at the time, that the Government was compelled to give way before it. The public would not hear a word about the practical difficulties which beset the question. So strong was the feeling, that there was nothing for it but to pass a law which placed thousands of negroes on the plantations in an anomalous position. In Barbados squatting is out of the question, as there is no longer any uncultivated land, and they have begun to see the necessity of working for a fixed wage, for the population has now reached 200,000, in an island no larger than the Isle of Wight, and of these, 180,000 are

black. Even now they have a strong dislike for regular work, and will perform herculean tasks to earn enough to be lazy upon for a time. They have no idea of thrift. The name of "freedom" has had an intoxicating effect. As an instance, a West Indian lady told me that if she took black servants to England, they had their heads quite turned by seeing milkmen, newspaper boys, etc., in an inferior position to themselves, and became so vain that they would hardly do any work at all. At the same time they can be very loyal, and will often work well for a master to whom they are really attached.

We rested for a long time under the shade of the trees, and amused ourselves by indulging our black boy in a *viva voce* examination in arithmetic. We had also been joined by a white peasant lad who had noticed the luncheon-basket, and we whiled away a great deal of time in truly tropical fashion, stretched at full length on the ground, and lazily interested in their answers. Then we started to walk seven miles back to Bathsheba. Descending slowly along one of the coral ridges, we reached the railway, and followed the coast from here to Bathsheba along the sleepers of the line, with the sea rolling in on our left.

Every now and again the railway crosses small rivers, which find their way through the sandhills into the ocean. These bridges are somewhat alarming to cross, for there is nothing to walk on except the edge of the beam on which the sleeper is laid, so that it is impossible to have one's two feet abreast; and the situation is not improved by the presence of big, square-headed nails which have to be stepped over. Between the sleepers one can see the bed of the river a hundred feet below, and it is difficult to check the impulse to jump. No doubt to an Alpine climber this would be child's play, but for a person with ordinary nerves it was profoundly uncomfortable, and I must confess to having reached the opposite bank of the St José river with a feeling of intense relief.

A little farther on we stopped to have a bathe in the surf. Stories of the delight of this surf bathing had often reached me, and I was eager to try the experiment of plunging in, and letting the big warm waves break over me. We were no sooner up to our ankles in the water, however, than one of the big warm waves bowled me over and over on the sand with such vehemence that I became exceedingly cautious for the future, when I at last regained my feet. All around us was a seething mass of foam, breakers

bearing down upon us from all directions. Sometimes they met with a loud report, and shot up in the air in a pillar of foam, hurling us about like grains of sand if we happened to be in the vortex. The strength of the back-wash, too, was tremendous, and it was no easy matter to hold one's ground. The temperature of the water was about 80° F., and under our feet was the soft coral sand. After dining at Bathsheba we sat out on one of the huge boulders which lie scattered about the windward coast, in brilliant moonlight, listening to the roar of the waves and watching their ceaseless struggle.

The next day we explored the coast beyond St Andrews as far as Pico Teneriffe, a curious conical mass of white limestone, rising up from the sea amidst a chaos of great blocks of volcanic rock. All along here the coast is quite awful in its wild grandeur, all is mysterious, nothing interferes with the solitariness of sea and sky, nothing is heard but the thundering of the breakers on the crags below. We picked up many strange shells, and a cone brought down by the Orinoco and washed up on the beach, and we came upon the skeleton of a large whale left high and dry upon the rocks. All along the cliffs were innumerable prickly cacti, which

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were strangely in harmony with the weirdness of surrounding nature.

From Pico Teneriffe we climbed to the top of a stony ridge, which runs across the island till it ends in rugged cliffs some three miles from Speightstown. The whole windward coast lay like a map stretched out before us; rocks of all kinds of fantastic forms with the waves seething round them, stretched in a long line to Dan and Bathsheba, and again into the far distance. A little farther on we could follow the horizon almost the whole way round the island; and there was such a sense of unlimited space, that we could almost fancy ourselves standing on some distant rock in the very centre of the universe. We had soon to climb down in more senses than one, however, and to walk three terrible miles along the hard, white road.

Speightstown played its part in the drama which took place in the island after the execution of Charles I., when the Royalist governor, Lord Willoughby, refused to submit to the Commonwealth, and held out for many months. It shows no sign now of ever having been interesting.

We had a carriage to meet us, and drove back along the coast road in the cool of the evening to

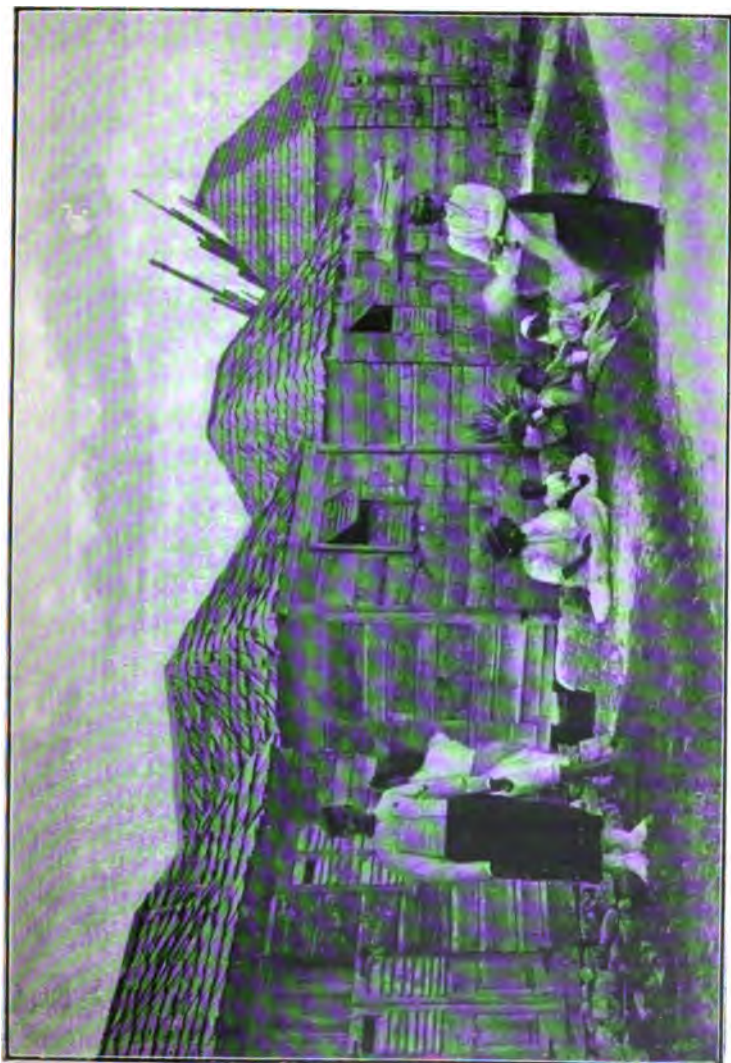
Bridgetown. Our black driver was much excited because a large whale had been caught about a mile from Speightstown. We stopped to inspect it, but all we could discern was a black substance protruding out of the sea, and swarms upon swarms of niggers wading into the water after it. Boats crowded round the carcase, and more black figures were to be seen standing upon it and pummelling it with some strange instruments which we could not distinguish clearly. We met several of the natives coming away delighted, and carrying pieces of the flesh, which looked very much like beef-steak. A dip in the cool water at Freshwater Bay was most delicious after nearly five hours' walking under the tropical sun. We drove into Bridgetown at sunset, feeling that what we had seen that day would remain as a picture in our minds through life.

And so good-bye to Barbados! And may the storm-clouds which hover round it soon disperse! Even since these pages were begun, another terrible disaster has befallen it—the memorable hurricane of 13th September 1898. The storm burst over the island at about seven o'clock on a Saturday evening, when all the people were doing their shopping in

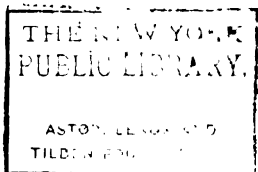
Bridgetown for Sunday. In a few hours, 30,000 people were homeless and destitute. The wind reached a velocity of seventy-five miles an hour, and carried away hundreds of wooden houses as if they had been cardboard. When the owners got back to them on Sunday morning, they found nothing but floods and wreckage. Soup kitchens were opened by the Vestries for the relief of the starving people, and the scene is thus described in the first edition of the *Barbados Advocate* which appeared after the hurricane was over:—

"The doors and windows of the office were crowded with swarms of applicants for food or other forms of relief. The experiences these people had gone through were writ plainly on their faces. Each one wore the same expression of dazed, strained horror, the result of a shock that the mind had not yet been able to throw off. Indeed, so pronounced was the similarity of expression, that the crowd around looked like a huge family of paupers."

In a few hours, more than a quarter of a million pound's worth of damage had been wrought. "It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good," and even in the case of a hurricane some good may come. The good which did follow this awful calamity was a



NEGRO QUARTER, BRIDGETOWN.



spontaneous outburst of sympathy from distant parts of the Empire, showing that unity wherein its greatness lies. Almost immediately the Lord Mayor of London opened a fund, while help began to pour in from Canada, Mauritius, and other places. This was followed by a generous grant from the home Government, which will go far to set this plucky little island on her feet again. May there be happier years in store for her!

CHAPTER III.

BARBADOS TO TRINIDAD.

AFTER reading "Westward Ho!" and still more after reading "At Last!" it was impossible to go back to England and not see Trinidad!

Accordingly, on the 24th of February, I left Carlisle Bay at eight o'clock in the evening, on board the intercolonial steamer *Solent*, bound for the south. As yet, though we had seen many trees and shrubs which were essentially tropical, and had seen a good deal of tropical ways, the real tropics in all their unexampled beauty and luxuriance were yet to come. The very next morning, at daybreak, we should be at anchor off the lovely island of St Vincent. Here it was that the Carib Indians made, perhaps, their most determined stand. They were warriors to the backbone, and would not yield without a desperate struggle to the wave of European

colonisation. The island was discovered by Columbus in 1498, and nearly two hundred years later was left in the hands of the Caribs unmolested for three years, England and France agreeing that St Vincent and Dominica should be given up to them. French settlements, however, multiplied, until at last the island was attacked and captured by Monckton and Rodney, toward the end of the eighteenth century. Struggles for the mastery between the two great nations went on continually for one hundred and twenty years, the Caribs always seizing every opportunity to attack their conquerors. In 1797, after a violent rebellion, five thousand of them were transported to an island off Honduras, and the island became finally English. From that time everything has been quiet, though there is still a small Carib community in the island, living very much to themselves, and gradually dying out.

Waking in the early hours of the morning, I looked out of my port-hole and was astonished to see the dark mountains of St Vincent looming up before me (for we were only a mile or so from the shore), and looking very grand and mysterious in the grey dawn. As the daylight increased, one could see that every peak was clothed to its very summit

with thick forest. The colouring was exquisite, the rising sun just illumining the forests with a soft glow. Before us was a lovely crescent-shaped bay. In the centre a grand conical mountain rose majestically from behind the little town of Kingstown, its slopes falling gracefully away till they ended in the two little headlands which enclosed the harbour. But the forests! As I gazed upon them I felt that here, indeed, were the tropics in all their splendour. My whole soul seemed to form the words "At Last!" as I felt, like Kingsley, a deep sense of thankfulness that it had fallen to my lot to see them.

In another half hour or so we had fired our gun and dropped anchor in the little bay. As our steamer would not be under weigh again for about two hours, I hailed a boat, and put out for the shore. Landing at the little wooden jetty, round which a motley crowd of negresses, in bright-coloured dresses and handkerchiefs, was gathered, I made my way to the market-place. Here I was at once struck by the marked contrast between Kingstown and Bridgetown, Barbados. Instead of the bewildering bustle and never-ceasing movement of Bridgetown, here was an air of desolation and desertion.

Where were all the buggies, and carts, and mule drays, and the busy scenes along the quay? Now and then a white planter trotted past on horseback, and some women were selling fruits and cakes in the market, but the streets looked half deserted, and there was no sign of activity. I picked up a little negro boy—an intelligent little fellow, whose father was a bookseller in the town—and got him to guide me up a path which followed a rich valley inland, till we reached a spot commanding a glorious view of the town and bay. On our way we passed numbers of negro huts and cottages with their little bits of garden. These people are mostly freeholders, often squatters on unreclaimed lands or deserted plantations. They live a happy and undisturbed life, growing their yams and sweet potatoes, bananas, plantains, mangoes, and bread-fruit. Of these they grow enough for their own consumption with a margin for the market, and the women may be seen trudging down the hills bare-footed with the fruit balanced on their heads.

My little guide was full of information about the flowers and shrubs. Many of his answers were no doubt random shots, because, as I soon discovered, the negro is like the Irish peasant,

and will always answer with the greatest assurance, though he may not even have understood the question.

By nine o'clock we were again under weigh, and steaming in the direction of the Grenadines. The mountains of St Vincent grew smaller and smaller, till they were nothing more than a blue haze on the horizon. It was tantalising to leave them so soon, and to feel that one had been within such easy access of the famous Souffrière. This volcano rises to a height of about four thousand feet, and is noted for the terrible eruption which took place in 1812. A little black boy was at work on the slope of the mountain, when a shower of stones suddenly began to fall about him. He imagined some other boy was throwing them, and promptly began to return them in the direction whence they came, but the shower continued, and at last he became terrified, and fled down the mountain side for his life. In a short time balls of fire were slowly filling up the sky and the lava pouring down. It is said that the boy is still living in the island. For a whole day Barbados—one hundred miles away—was enveloped in Egyptian darkness, alternating with strange lurid effects. Birds fell to the ground dead, and

soon a thick dust began to descend from the clouds overhead. The whole island was in a state of panic, people thinking the end of the world had come. The effect of the eruption was to form a new crater. Both are now quiet, the base of the latter containing a grim-looking lake of sulphurous water.

Another terrible visitation has since fallen upon this unhappy island, which was in low-water already at the time when we touched at Kingstown, and obtained this passing glimpse of it. The hurricane of September 1898—more violent even than its predecessor of 1831—burst with greater fury over St Vincent than any other island. The wooden cabins of the black peasants were carried away like rubbish; churches and hospitals were reduced to a mass of ruins, and the trees all over the mountain sides and along the coast were swept of all their wealth of foliage. The damage done to plantations was enormous, and it will probably take years to recover from it. A grant from the home Government and a Lord Mayor's fund have done much to alleviate the immediate distress, but it has been a terrible blow to the prosperity of the island.

The planters of St Vincent seem to have been

clinging to sugar, and to have been suffering in consequence for many years. A large proportion of the land has passed into the hands of a few owners who still remain conservative. Wherever land can be obtained, there cocoa, coffee, nutmegs, and especially arrowroot are said to have been successfully grown, but most of the old planters have not yet learnt to keep pace with the times.

As St Vincent faded away, the bold outlines of the Grenadines stood out magnificently in the offing. These beautiful islands form a chain which stretches the whole way from St Vincent to Grenada. Some of them, such as Monos and Carriacou, are large enough to be inhabited by a number of settlers, who raise live stock for the larger islands. No steamers call there, and they are often cut off for weeks from the outside world. The rest are nothing more than rocky eminences starting up out of the sea, with their slopes richly coated with a covering of tropical trees. White fleecy clouds drifting across the sun cast their shadows over the mountain sides, and bold headlands stood out in ever-changing shapes as we glided past them. Hundreds of flying-fish were skimming over the surface of the water, sometimes twenty or thirty together, their scales flashing in

the sunlight. The trade wind blew freshly behind us, covering the sea with white horses.

After a run of about five hours we passed the northernmost point of Grenada, and for the next two hours or so we skirted the coast, steaming within a mile of the tropical beach. Rich valleys, intersected by ridges running down from the central range to the sea, followed one another in rapid succession. The warm brown tint of the cocoa-nut tree gave a rich tone to the forests, whilst here and there were patches of a deep orange amongst the masses of green and brown. This latter colouring was so unique and so beautiful, that I felt a great curiosity to know what tree or shrub produced it. We had on board a gentleman from Grenada who was returning from a visit to the mother country. He was proud of his island, and very ready to expound its charms. This, he said, was no other than the glorious *Bois immortelle* tree of Trinidad, so beautifully described by Kingsley, and famous for its use as a protector to the delicate cocoa tree, which requires to be shaded from the rays of the mid-day sun. Forming the backbone of the island was a chain of wooded mountains stretching north and south in a series of peaks, exquisite in their form

and symmetry. Innumerable cocoa-nut palms lined the water's edge, waving their graceful stems in the breeze. Little hamlets nestled amongst the trees, with here and there a church spire rising from amongst the clustered roofs.

Grenada is evidently more prosperous and enterprising than St Vincent. Cocoa is coming in fast, as we could see, and nutmegs are also largely grown. The roads are improving, and people speak of it as if it were advancing. And yet, as regards climate and formation, there can be very little difference between the two islands. In Grenada, however, there is more land in the market, and more inclination to try new experiments. There are many estates, I am told, which it would probably pay a man to buy and work up. There is said to be a great future for Liberian coffee, should any planter have the enterprise to start it.

Presently we rounded a little wooded point, fired our gun, and were at anchor in the roadstead of St George, the capital, which is beautifully situated, and suggests a coast town on the Riviera as seen from the steamer. The houses and churches climb one beyond another into the hills, till they seem to lose themselves in the forests above them. A fine

headland runs out in the centre, bending inwards so as to enfold a perfect little inner harbour, the view of which burst suddenly upon us as we rounded the point. As soon as ever the gun was fired, the usual flotilla of boats surrounded us, and the fight for passengers began. The black boatmen surpassed themselves, yelling like maniacs while they pushed each other out of the way. As we had two hours to spare, I decided to go ashore immediately. The bows of three different boats clashed together under my feet as I reached the bottom of the gangway, and a regular free fight ensued. I was determined, however, to have the boat I had chosen, and after a considerable amount of shouting and upsetting of oars in the water, during which I got badly splashed, I finally tumbled into it and was pulled lustily ashore. On landing I got another black boy to act as bearer and guide, and spent the two hours rambling about amongst the hills. Had I been alone I should certainly have lost my way, for seeing a path which looked exceedingly enticing, and which appeared likely to come out eventually into the town, I expressed my intention of exploring it. My guide, however, put his foot down. "You go dat way," he said, "de bushes humbug you," and his remark was so

suggestive that I allowed him to assume authority for the future. He took me, nevertheless, into regions where ferns, grasses, and shrubs "humbled" me considerably, but we eventually emerged amongst some of the negro cottages, and explored the gardens in a way which appeared to me perfectly unjustifiable. The owners seemed quite pleased, however, and a mulatto woman gathered me a beautiful bunch from her best flower-bed. She was particularly anxious that I should accept a bachelor's button, a small purple flower like a diminutive pink. I returned to the steamer laden with spoils, including a very fine oleander blossom, and much impressed with the country, and with the friendliness of the people of Grenada. The sun went down almost directly afterwards in a bank of magnificent red and golden clouds, and all the mountains and forests of Grenada were bathed in pink, the effect being inexpressibly beautiful. Almost immediately the lights of the town began to shine out one by one, and in another half-hour it was dark. It was nine o'clock before we started for Trinidad. Next morning we were to pass through the Bocas or narrow straits at the entrance to the Gulf of Paria from the Caribbean Sea. All were anxious to witness the passage of

the ship through these magnificent "gates" which so impressed Columbus four hundred years ago; so the deck was soon deserted, all but those on duty having given themselves up temporarily to the god of sleep.

CHAPTER IV.

TRINIDAD.

AT half-past five I awoke, and hurriedly slipping on some clothes, went on deck to see the first glimpse of South America. The dawn was just breaking as we drew near to Trinidad. The sailors, who were busy washing the decks, were none too pleased to see a passenger appear on the scenes, and it was difficult to avoid being washed or swept away, as they were not disposed to study my convenience. However, I took refuge on a coil of rope, where I was comparatively safe.

The scene was deeply impressive; we were just approaching one of the narrowest channels, the *Boca Grande* lying away to the west of us. Looming ahead in the dim light of dawn were two giant cliffs, facing one another like lions couchants. Between them was a channel not more than one

hundred yards or so in width, through which we had to pass. Grim and terrible they looked in the grey light. The sea was as calm as a mill-pond, and there was no sound but the throbbing of the engines and the gentle lapping of the water against the ship's sides. We were now passing the Boca, and could see the forests covering the cliffs from their summits to the water's edge.

A few minutes more and we had entered the Gulf of Paria. To our left a long line of forest-clad mountains lay before us, vanishing at last in a blue haze, which lay over Port of Spain. As we advanced into the open water of the gulf, we looked back on the chain of little sylvan islands which connects Trinidad with the Spanish main. Far away beyond to the west was the blue outline of the Venezuelan mountains, which are part of the same system as the Trinidad range, with channels like mountain passes cut through them by the sea.

The sunrise had now begun, and in a moment the whole expanse of water in front of us was changed from a delicate silver to a perfect blaze of gold. As the sun rose higher in the heavens, the colour turned to crimson, which gradually tinged the peaks of the mountains, and crept slowly downwards, bathing the

forests in a rosy light. Far ahead of us we could see a low line of white mist and a cluster of masts and shipping, which we knew to be Port of Spain. We drew nearer and nearer, until we began to thread our way amongst the steamers and sailing vessels at anchor. The mist still lay thick over Port of Spain, which is built on a large plain below the level of the sea. Long before we fired our gun, we could see the negro boatmen gesticulating at us from several hundred yards away. At Port of Spain there is always a steam launch to meet the mail, so these gentlemen are more than usually anxious to entrap some unwary passenger before he discovers it. I was fortunate enough to hear of the launch in time, so had nothing to do but to watch their frantic gestures and grimaces from the deck until it was time to go ashore. My indifference had the effect of driving them to the verge of frenzy, and I thought one man would have a fit, while another nearly upset the boat and himself in his endeavours to attract attention.

The launch was at last ready to take us ashore. Though it was still very early—only a little after seven o'clock—the sun had already gained a great deal of power, and most of us were glad to get

shelter under the awning. We were landed at a somewhat grimy looking quay, just opposite the custom-house, and after a good deal of shouting and confusion, I found myself in a buggy on the way to the Queen's Park Hotel on the Savannah. As we drove through the streets of Port of Spain, one could see that it was a city of considerable size, covering a much larger area than Bridgetown, Barbados. The first impression, however, is anything but cheering. The wide, desolate streets and warehouse-like buildings are melancholy in the extreme. Ugly-looking gutters carry away the refuse, and to a large extent the drainage. There is no brisk traffic to brighten the scene; a few buggies are visible, and now and then a tram passes, but everything appears sleepy. One is already conscious of a deep feeling of depression, which develops into one of positive creepiness at first sight of that evil-looking bird, the Johnny Crow of Trinidad. The streets are literally full of them. They creep about amongst the refuse in a half-shamefaced and half-insolent manner. Large, black, awkward birds, with grey, vulture-like heads, they live upon any putrid matter they can find; the more disgusting it is, the more they gloat over it, and sometimes several are to be seen fighting

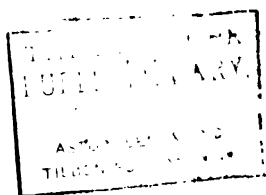
over the carcase of a dog or a cat. When gorged they perch on the roofs of the houses, and their appearance is then more uncanny than ever, with their wings stretched out to dry. In this attitude they look like signs over an inn, and it was not till my attention was called to them that I realised they were living creatures at all, much less the same which were patrolling the streets. A fellow-passenger informed me that in Vera Cruz the Johnny Crow is so bold that a man cannot lie down to rest without the risk of several swooping down upon him. This may be a traveller's tale, but it was not so very difficult to believe. Gruesome as they are to look at, they nevertheless do a useful work, for the drainage of West Indian towns is very primitive (as my nose very soon suggested to me on the way to the hotel). Their value has been so far recognised that they are even protected by statute.

The effect, when we emerged from the dismal streets of Port of Spain suddenly on to the broad open Savannah, was magnificent, and acted like a tonic on the nervous system. The hotel is finely situated, with a view right across the plain to the mountains only a mile away, where "The High Woods" were to be seen within reach at last. It



JOHNNY CROW, PORT OF SPAIN, TRINIDAD.

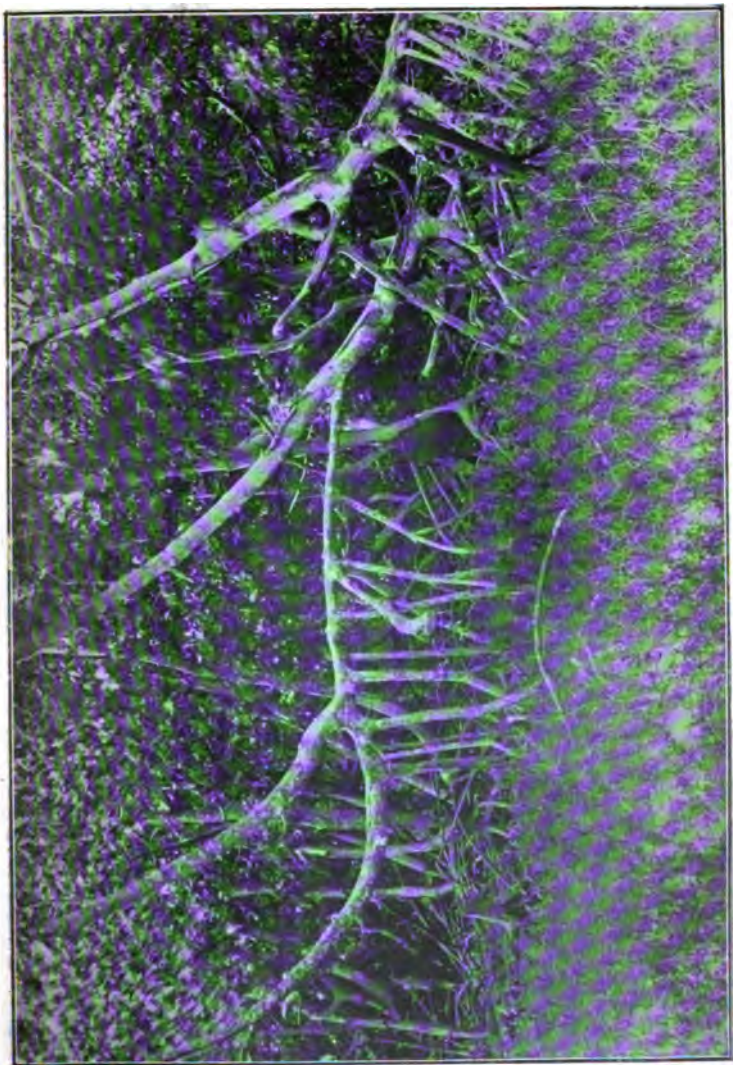
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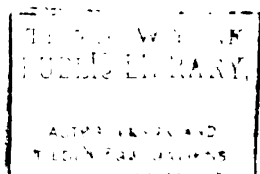
would be worth any one's while to cross the Atlantic to sit on that verandah! Many of the finest trees of the forest were scattered about on the broad plain before us. Except for the coarse tropical grass, the foreground is not unlike an English park. Cattle of every shade of brown are grazing under the trees. Picturesque little villas run all round the Savannah, and Government House is visible at the foot of the mountains which form the background of the picture. In the evening, cricket, tennis, golf, and even football may be seen going on under the palm trees. Then when the sun has set the air is full of fire-flies darting about like little stars in the darkness. As they circle in the air the light gleams brightly for a moment and at regular intervals, and then once more disappears, flashing out again and again, and vanishing like the revolving light of a lighthouse. From time to time one of them would fly on to the verandah, and we were able to examine it closely. They are about the size of a May-fly, and are in reality small beetles, the light being given off from the abdomen. It is difficult to describe the fascination of these tropical nights. The brilliant moonlight on the Savannah, the distant hum of the insects, the song of the crickets, and the croaking and whistling of the frogs,

all these linger in the mind long after one has seen and heard them perhaps for the last time, like "the imperishable memory of a dream."

It was impossible here to remain long inactive in spite of the great heat, so next day I left Port of Spain by the Government line for Arima, in the interior of the island. The little railway runs along the edge of a mangrove swamp which stretches some miles southwards along the shore. On the left is a rich valley with the northern mountains in the background, masses of the glorious *Bois immortelle* tree making a brilliant contrast to the varying shades of green. The first sight of a mangrove swamp brings back vividly to the mind many and many a tale of death from its dreaded miasma — tales of the old explorers, buccaneers, and settlers stricken down one after another, and dying of fever in the forest. Who has not felt a shudder run through him at the thought of this terrible enemy, much more to be dreaded than either Spaniard or Indian? A feeling of awe comes over one at the sight of that horrible mud, which is so deep that if a man tries to wade through it he may at any moment be swallowed up, never to see the light again. The mangrove itself seems in keeping with its weird surroundings. Roots, stem, and



MANGROVE ROOTS.



branches are all well-nigh indistinguishable, for the stem is very little thicker than the branches and roots; and the mangrove, unlike other trees or shrubs, throws its roots downwards from the branches. These roots have the appearance of gigantic spiders' legs, and they advance rapidly unless torn up and carried away by the tide. Even when this happens, as it frequently does, they easily take root in another place, and begin to creep again over new ground. The mangrove thrives in salt-water, and is very often found at the mouths of rivers, or on low-lying flats along the sea-shore.

The railway soon leaves the coast at the little village of St Joseph, once the Spanish capital of the island, and plunges into the forest. Gigantic trees are to be seen on every side of one, every atom of space is covered by a tangle of bushes, creepers, and innumerable flowering shrubs. The eye is almost dazed with such luxuriance, not knowing where to look, at the grandeur of the forest trees, or the exquisite detail in all the flowers and shrubs which cover the banks. It seems as though the forests must be held back by main force from swallowing up the railway in twenty-four hours. The names of some of the stations here, such as Arouga and Tacarigua,

bear witness to their Spanish origin, and carry the mind back to the Middle Ages. The history of Trinidad is indeed a peculiarly interesting one. It was occupied by the Spaniards towards the end of the sixteenth century. Not long afterwards it was attacked by Sir Walter Raleigh, who burnt the old capital of St Joseph, but sailed away again without dislodging the Spaniards. In 1783 a number of French settlers came over from Martinique, Guadeloupe, and St Domingo, enticed by a proclamation which announced that all debtors were to become free from liability, and proprietors were allowed a premium on their slaves. Although, as a consequence, a great many bad characters found their way into the island, its agricultural prosperity was largely increased, and the population went up from one thousand to over twelve thousand. It was still a Spanish colony, but had now become practically French. Only fourteen years later Sir Ralph Abercromby was sent with a fleet to recapture it from the Spaniards. The governor, Don Chacon, finding the English fleet too strong for him, gave in without a struggle, and Trinidad has since been a British possession. After such a chequered career, it would be strange if the population were not a mixed

one. But this is not all, for during the present century the Chinese have poured into the island in large numbers, while the extensive coolie immigration under Government control has added yet another element. It is doubtful whether anywhere in the world a stranger variety of features is to be seen. Europeans, Asiatics, South Americans, and Africans jostle one another in the streets. This is especially so in Arima, which is a rising inland town, and is only now in process of development. It has one very wide street, with some fair buildings and stores, and the rest of it consists of rows and rows of wooden huts or cabins. The Chinese are very much in evidence, nearly all of them being small shopkeepers. Agriculture they do not care for, except to grow yams and sweet potatoes for their own consumption. As small traders they find their place, for the coolies are at work on the plantations, and the negroes are either small freeholders or else police, cabmen, postmen, and such like. Here and there one sees a Chinaman with a pigtail and native costume, but the large majority have entirely dropped their national garb, and, except for the characteristic slit-like eyes and high cheek bones, look like ordinary European citizens.

Whilst exploring the town, I had the strange experience of listening through a phonograph to a familiar London music-hall song in a little shop kept by a Chinaman, with two negroes sitting by, and a group of Indian coolie children gazing at me from the door.

Arima does not possess anything approaching a hotel, but the proprietor of one of the stores, a mulatto, very kindly placed a room at my disposal, and sent in search of an old negress, who was known to be something of a cook. This good lady, who was black as coal and of very massive proportions, arrived grumbling a good deal, but she finally consented to cook some steak and poached eggs. My teeth failed to grapple with the steak, which was somewhat like boot leather; the eggs, however, were good. Having taken leave of my benefactress, and expressed a hope that she would not be over-fatigued, I then set out to explore. About half an hour's walk from the town brings one to the banks of a beautiful river in the forest. Silk-cotton trees, with tall, stately stems rising to a height of one hundred feet before the lowest branch is reached, tower above the throng of bread-fruit trees, mangoes, tamarinds, bamboo, coffee and cocoa trees, which grow in a dense and well-nigh impenetrable tangle around them. The ground is

covered with all kinds of magnificent ferns, wild palms, grasses, and innumerable species of undergrowth, whilst masses of creepers cover even the tallest trees, climbing the trunks and spreading over the branches, then falling in festoons to the ground. Through all this wealth of gigantic vegetation the river winds, now very little more than a brook, rippling over the stones with a cool, refreshing sound, but often rising some twenty feet in a few hours, and becoming a roaring torrent. Sitting on a rock at the side of the water, I gazed long upon the scene before me. Some coolies were bathing in a beautiful pool at the bend of the river, their bronze colouring making a fine contrast to the green of the forest behind them. Presently they disappear, and a little mulatto boy comes to fill a bucket at the river. It seems to be too large for him, and he is evidently in difficulties till a big coolie in a white fez helps him to lift it on to his head, and he marches proudly off. Now quite a stream of coolies with flowing hair and moustaches begin to pour down towards the river-bank, with buckets balanced across their shoulders by a pole, to fetch and sell water. They chatter to each other in a jargon which is unintelligible. Round the bend of the river, a little higher up, there suddenly appears

a little body of boys and girls. Some of them have a scanty covering of cloth or cotton, others are as nature made them. They all plunge in just as they are into the cool water. Now a hideous old negress appears on the opposite bank, dressed in white cotton, with bare feet and legs, carrying a large bundle on her head, and smoking an old clay pipe. I watch her wading through the stream, and wonder whether she will drop her bundle. But no! she has it in perfect control, and does not even need to use her arms to balance it. Meanwhile dragon-flies of all colours are whirling about in the air, and skimming over the surface of the water. Gorgeous butterflies, two or three times the size of any to be seen in England, flutter past incessantly. Humming-birds, hardly any larger than butterflies, with plumage of a brilliant emerald green, fly from branch to branch, sucking the honey from the blossoms. Little fishes innumerable are darting about in the pools.

I tore myself away at last, eager to explore farther into the heart of the forest. It was quite impossible to walk along the river-bank, which was covered with such a tangle of bushes and shrubs that it would take about an hour to struggle through a hundred yards of them. In addition to this,

there is more than one deadly snake in the bush in Trinidad, and no one who values his life at all would needlessly risk an encounter. Still, the mystery of it all was so fascinating, and played so powerfully on the imagination, that I determined to penetrate a little way somehow; so returning to my mulatto friend, I got him to find me a guide in the shape of a young stalwart negro of about eighteen or nineteen, with an honest, good-natured face. We picked our way over the stones, or clambered through the undergrowth where it was possible. Every now and then we found ourselves at a standstill, and had to cross the river to get on. Here and there were pools which might have been fathoms deep, but the only way was to put my trust entirely in my black companion, and let him carry me on his back to the opposite bank. He pointed out a dark, mysterious-looking pool with a massive ledge of rock overlying it, saying with great satisfaction, "A girl drowned dere; never find de body;" and directly afterwards he staggered in mid-stream, and so nearly lost his balance that I began to think a very similar story would soon be told of me. He recovered himself, however, and we crept on farther along the edge of the water, every now and then

disturbing big lizards, the sudden rustle in the grass giving me a very uneasy feeling. Whilst resting for a few minutes and watching the birds and butterflies, we were startled by a sudden movement in the grass about ten yards away, which might have been another lizard, so far as my eyes could tell. My companion, however, became greatly agitated, exclaiming that it was a cribo, and pointing eagerly to the place whence the sound came. He threw a stone, and as he did so I could just detect a dark object wriggling through the grass. I was not a little relieved to find that it wriggled in the opposite direction. These cribos, though one of the principal snakes of Trinidad, are in reality harmless, and are enemies of the poisonous species. My guide, however, declared that this was a poisonous one, though he called it a cribo; with the negro it is "anything for a sensation." I inquired what, if any, was the remedy for snake-bite. "Dat quite simple," he replied; "you mus' say a praise, and rub tobacco in de place, den all de poison come out." His brother was very good at snake-charming, and he could do a little himself, but he was not quite safe at it. Finding himself thoroughly in his element on the subject,

he went on to tell me of another snake which springs at a man across the stream if he picks up a stone to throw at it. "You stoop down, de snake he spring like dat," and he made a gesture indicative of the snake springing, which made me wish myself well out of Trinidad. But there was yet another more wonderful still, he said, with a strict sense of justice, which rings a bell three times before attacking, and if one does not get well away before the second bell, the situation is critical. I gathered afterwards that there was a certain substratum of fact in this highly dramatic picture ; that is, a species really exists which makes a sound like a bell before striking. The really deadly snake of Trinidad is the coral snake, which is small and of a rosy hue, and which is all the more dangerous from its comparatively harmless appearance.

Coming to a place where the water was too deep to ford and the banks were impassable, we climbed up through the forest to a small cacao plantation, disturbing numbers of lizards in the bush. Suddenly we found ourselves on a little hillock, which had been completely cleared, with a quaint little coolie-hut perched on the top of it. The whole outside world was hidden by the surrounding trees.

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Seated on a small verandah was a fine-looking old coolie, with piercing eyes, sharp-cut features, and long flowing beard and hair. This and a bath-towel were his whole costume. Seated next to him was his better half, clad in loose white draperies, with a barbarous profusion of rings through her nose and ears. She was a handsome woman, but I longed to tell her how completely she was spoiling her nose. A little bronze-coloured baby lay on her lap, for whom as yet even a bath-towel was considered unnecessary, and by her side stood a little girl of seven or eight, similarly clad! We exchanged salaams, and the old man seemed pleased to make my acquaintance. When it was explained to him that I wished to see the cacao trees, he became most vivacious, and darted about from one tree to another, chattering incessantly. He evidently took a great pride in his little plantation, but unhappily I could only catch the merest scraps of what he said. His voice was pitched so high that he might have been haranguing a mob, and it set all my nerves tingling to hear it. At the same time, his words tumbled over each other in the wildest confusion.

These cacao plantations are so great a feature

in Trinidad, that it may be interesting to give some description of them here. The trees are always grown under the shade of the larger forest trees, in order to retain the necessary moisture for their roots. For this purpose a piece of land must be obtained in the virgin forest, and partially cleared. The *Bois immortelle* trees are found to be the best for shading purposes. In about four years the cacao tree begins to bear its fruit, which hangs in long pods from both branches and stem. These pods are from seven to ten inches long, like elongated coker-nuts, and vary in colour to a wonderful extent. Pink, grey, orange, green, yellow, and crimson are all to be seen, the same plant often bearing pods of totally different tints. The delicate oval leaves droop in clusters from the branches, the colour varying from dark green to a beautiful copper, the distant effect of which is exquisite. After six or seven years the trees begin to meet overhead. The older ones are considered to produce the best cocoa, while the cost of cultivation is less. The cacao trees are planted, as a rule, about thirteen feet apart, but to the traveller fresh from northern latitudes, it is hard to distinguish a cacao plantation from the virgin forest itself, so dense does the vege-

tation appear. In fact, I found it difficult to believe that what I saw was the result of human labour. Inside the pods are the cocoa nibs familiar to us all, encased in a pulp not unlike that of a water-melon. To start a plantation it is usual to buy a piece of the forest, and let it to negro cultivators or coolies, who erect their huts upon it, and in return for their labour grow their own fruits and vegetables, for which they are able to obtain a fair profit. It will easily be seen what a profitable speculation cacao planting is, and it is actually estimated that money so invested will double itself in value *plus interest* in five years.

Some of the other islands, notably Dominica, might well follow the example of Trinidad in planting cacao estates, for the soil and climate are literally made for it, and the shade is easily obtained. Trinidad has a very fair proportion of cultivated land, but there is still a considerable area which could be worked with profit, but which has not yet been touched.

With many salaams and profound bows the old gentleman took leave of us, and we made our way back to Arima. My negro boy pointed out to me a cluster of huts through which we passed on the

outskirts of the town, inhabited by a race of Spanish or Portuguese half-castes, saying, "Dey very bad people—dey not mind rob us—nebbber do no work, always fighting," and one or two specimens which we passed on the road had faces which so thoroughly bore out his observations, that I was glad to leave Arima without any further introduction to them.

Before leaving Trinidad, I was fortunately able to avail myself of the very kind invitation given me by Commander C——, now Protector of Immigrants in the island, to accompany him on one of his tours of inspection round the various estates. I have already spoken of the increasing coolie immigration, and the necessity of appointing a Government officer to protect them against the planters and themselves. The coolies are landed first at the Five Islands, about half-way down the coast from the Bocas to Port of Spain, where they are kept for a certain time in quarantine, and then drafted on to the various estates under the supervision of the Protector.

After taking early coffee at the Savannah Hotel, we trained to Arouga, and from there drove to one of the largest estates, which is managed by a

Spanish creole, who gave us an excellent breakfast. West Indian fruits and vegetables were set before us in profusion, but what I specially remember was the rind of the shaddock, dried and preserved. This fruit is three or four times the size of an orange, and belongs to the same type, but the fresh fruit is somewhat coarse and the taste acrid. I never again came across it in this form so delicious as we found it here. After breakfast, Mr Alphonso took us over the estate, and I was shown the various processes of fermenting, drying, and sorting the nibs after they are taken from the pod. They are placed in barrels and allowed to remain there for a period of from three to ten days. The colour changes meanwhile from violet to brown, and the nibs become crisper. They are placed on a platform to dry, and finally passed through a sorting machine which works in a fascinating manner, throwing aside those which are not of the proper size and consistency. After we had inspected a coolie hospital—(these are attached compulsorily to all estates)—Mr Alphonso had a large stud of mules to show us, and some magnificent Indian cattle. Before taking leave of me he presented me with some squirrel's tails as a small memento of the

occasion. The Trinidad squirrel is a great enemy to the cacao plantations. We drove for many miles along a road which was deep in mud, and which seemed to be taking us into the midst of the high woods and forests, and farther and farther from the haunts of man. The day was typical of the wet season, heavy, damp, and oppressive, with a steady rain falling, so that breathing was an effort. We were obliged at last to proceed at a walking pace, the roads being in places almost impassable. Here and there we passed ruined sugar usines, with valuable plant lying about the road abandoned because it was no longer worth the expense of moving it for the price it would fetch. These were lamentable signs of the decay of the sugar industry. We called at another planter's house, which was conspicuous for its beautiful tropical garden, the palmistes and crotons being quite magnificent. The rain seemed now to have gathered its forces and came down in a perfect torrent, the air resounding with the roar of the drops upon the leaves. As soon as it had somewhat abated we drove to Tacarigua Station, and so back by the railway to Port of Spain. Commander C——'s subordinate officer, a fine-looking

old gentleman, with a long grey beard, called by the natives "Bhudda," on account of his venerable appearance, who had also accompanied us, told us thrilling stories of adventures with the coolies. He had held his post for some years under the retiring Protector, and his life had more than once been in danger. The coolies, when roused, are like tigers, and use their cutlasses freely. He had been obliged before now to barricade himself in his office in Port of Spain, and await them at the top of the stairs with a revolver.

Perhaps the greatest wonder of Trinidad is its pitch lake, a vast accumulation of "asphaltum," ninety-nine acres in area, on the south-west coast. The lake is now leased by the Government to a New York Company, who export the pitch to America. The little gulf steamer leaves Port of Spain at seven o'clock in the morning for San Fernando, and after calling there, continues her journey to La Brea, a little village within a mile of the lake, at which vessels are loaded with the asphalt for exportation.

The Northern Mountains looked glorious as we passed out into the gulf in the early morning. Away to the north were the Five Islands, beautiful

little wooded islets, such as one sees in Loch Lomond or Killarney, whilst the Bocas stood out grandly to the west of them, ending in the faint blue outline of the Cordilleras on the Spanish main.

I was soon struck by the extreme yellowness of the water, which is due to the deposit brought down by the Orinoco, and resembles the appearance of the Rhone as it enters Geneva. We passed thousands of strange creatures of the nature of jelly-fish, but in shape more like a ball. Solemn-looking pelicans, with their peculiar bag-like beaks, flew over our heads from time to time, diving again and again in search of their prey. We steamed mile after mile along a desolate shore fringed with mangroves, which extend the whole way from Port of Spain to San Fernando. Beyond San Fernando the scene is more desolate still. As we approached La Brea we could see in the distance one or two sailing vessels at anchor, and as we drew nearer a wooden pier, along which the buckets containing the asphalt were to be seen moving to and fro by means of iron ropes, which stretch for about a mile from the pier-head to the edge of the lake. On board the steamer I had the good fortune to fall in with Mr I——, the magistrate at La Brea, who was

going to hold his court that afternoon. He was accompanied by two other gentlemen, one a planter who had settled in the island, the other a partner in some large cocoa and sugar estate, who had come out for a few months on a tour of inspection. These gentlemen were also bound for the Pitch Lake, and on our arrival at La Brea, Mr I—— very kindly introduced me to the managing director of the Company, Mr M'C——, who was able to give me a mount from the village to the lake, which was most acceptable. We landed as usual in boats, on a blank, dreary-looking beach. Even here the ground under our feet was almost entirely composed of pitch, and the air was steamy and sulphurous, so that one could well understand the evil reputation of the place as a hot-bed of fever. The rays of the afternoon sun beat full upon the surface, which soon becomes baking hot. Luckily for us the day was overcast, and a light rain was falling. While awaiting the trap and pony which were to convey us respectively to the lake, Mr M'C—— offered us all some home-brewed "Kola water." In his opinion, the Kola nut has a great future before it on the European market. The tree is a native of West Africa, and has long been

employed by the black races as a non-alcoholic stimulant. In fact, it is their substitute for tea and coffee. The universal desire for a stimulant of this nature is one of the many instances which prove that the "whole world" is "kin." The nuts are said to contain more theine (from which the stimulating properties are derived) than either tea or coffee. They have two distinct properties; in the first place, they enhance the flavour of other food with which they are taken; and they also enable the traveller to last for a longer period without food than would otherwise be possible, and for this reason Kola is sometimes given to troops on the march. The tree is already being cultivated to a considerable extent in Jamaica, and will soon be a recognised article of commerce.

The buggy having at length arrived, my companions started off at a brisk pace. The pony was exceedingly fresh, and the two elderly gentlemen were evidently in a state of considerable anxiety, as they went leaping and bumping over all the hills and valleys with which the asphalt abounded. I followed on my steed at an easy trot. The stirrups were so adjusted that my head appeared to be between my knees, but I was afraid to stop and

have them altered, for I saw the buggy vanishing like a chariot in the distance, and the surrounding scenery was so uninviting that I preferred to keep them in view. Cantering up a slight incline, I suddenly came out upon the lake, and saw a vast expanse of apparently solid asphalt before me, intersected with deep ditches of dirty water filling the fissures which broke up the surface as far as the eye could see. Little clumps of bushes were dotted about, but there were no large trees to be seen. I half expected to find myself sinking, and was very glad to have such a docile steed. My companions in the buggy bore evidence of having been severely shaken when I rode up. I had hoped to make a dignified entry, but no sooner attempted to dismount than the saddle turned a somersault, with the result that I reached the ground with more speed than style. We picked our way over the pitch to a spot where a gang of negroes were hard at work breaking up the surface with pickaxes, an overseer standing by. The blocks, when detached, were thrown into trucks, which were immediately run along two rails by a party of negroes, who enlivened the proceedings with shouts and cries. Here the trucks are attached to iron ropes, and after

being automatically weighed as they pass, move slowly off towards the pier, fully a mile away, where the asphalt is transferred to the vessels awaiting it. Each truck contains two-thirds of a ton of pitch. The pits which are dug out in this way have completely closed up again within the space of twenty-four hours. As the centre of the lake is approached, the surface becomes spongy, owing to the presence of petroleum, and bubbles of sulphuretted hydrogen ooze up through the ground. The atmosphere becomes almost unbearable, and we soon found our curiosity giving place to an eager desire to get away from such an evil spot.

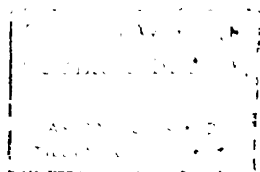
The return journey was not accomplished with much more dignity, for the pony Mr M'C— was driving was in better spirits than ever, and began by backing the two old gentlemen into a ditch, where they remained in a state of the greatest suspense, until extricated by some negroes who succeeded in pushing the buggy up the bank. I was admonished to proceed at a walking pace, owing to the slipperiness of the pitch after the rain. My pony, which was said to be a racer in the season, was quite content now with a pace of about two and a half miles an hour, so I rode leisurely into

La Brea, concluding that the racing season must have been long over, and wondering whether any of my friends would recognise me under the disguise of blue spectacles, white sun umbrella, and broad-brimmed hat.

Mr I—— had just finished his court when we reached the village, and a crowd of blacks were gathered round the court-house, eagerly discussing the events of the day. One buxom negress in a white calico dress he had fined £2 for brawling in the street, and I inquired how it was possible for a woman in her position to pay such a sum. He replied that I had only to wait and see; and sure enough, a few minutes afterwards, she brought the money, though she looked extremely sulky about it. It appears that these people adopt a system of mutual insurance, by means of which money is advanced to them to enable them to pay their fines. It is therefore of no use to inflict small ones. The man who is continually coming upon the fund gets into disfavour with his fellows, and by fining them heavily the magistrate obtains a hold over them. Mr I—— declared that he had known them go into another district to break the law, because they knew that the fines were likely to be smaller there. The



CACAO TREE.



home Government often makes a mistake by sending out as magistrates men who, though clever and capable, have no experience of the negro character.

We all went out in a boat to meet the steamer—magistrate, planters, and tourists all huddled together with lusty negroes and fat negresses with their produce for the market, laughing and joking like high-spirited children. There were thirty or forty people to be landed at San Fernando, and a quantity of baggage and furniture besides. For this purpose one surf-boat arrived alongside, Mr I—— and his friends having gone ashore in the Customs' boat. The scene for the next quarter of an hour was one of the wildest confusion. Big, coarse-looking negresses, coolies with their wives and children, Venezuelan half-castes, and Chinese shopkeepers poured in torrents over the gangway. The coolie women were covered with jewels and ornaments, and sat in corners looking askance at the negroes, while the men looked as if they would have had great pleasure in sticking them there and then. Furniture was being hurled recklessly into the boat by the black crew, and a coolie woman who was resplendent in jewels got a nasty knock on the head

from the leg of a table. She made no complaint, but glared at the offender with eyes which were more eloquent than words. The boat was now full of chairs, tables, and human beings all jumbled up together, and was very low in the water. Another old negress began to upbraid the crew of the steamer in a loud, strident voice. Then she tried to hide her alarm by cracking jokes, but directly the boat gave a lurch her expression instantly changed. In the midst of the confusion, and while the men on the steamer had their attention taken up with some luggage, the other boatmen suddenly put off, leaving many of the passengers behind. This was the signal for a perfect storm of abuse. The air literally resounded with execrations, the niggers on the deck shaking their fists and dancing about like maniacs, uttering all kinds of threats. Those who had been left behind were also frantically excited, while the people in the boat tried to prevent their boatmen from coming back to the steamer. When these showed signs of wavering, these also flew into a state of frenzy, but at last threats or arguments seemed to prevail, and the boat was brought alongside. I can see her now being pulled slowly ashore, with her gunwales almost level with the water, the women shrieking and laughing hysterically,

and our quartermaster shaking his fist after her, and yelling in an awful voice, "You go 'long," some chaffing remark from the boat having evidently touched a sore point. We got into Port of Spain about an hour late, but without any further adventure.

It would take many months to explore, and many volumes to describe, all the beautiful walks and drives with which the island of Trinidad abounds. Rich valleys and mountains of three or four thousand feet covered with forest, roads with bamboos and silk-cotton trees meeting overhead, and surrounded with some of the loveliest vegetation in the world,—all these are within easy reach of the Savannah Hotel. Among the most luxuriant of the valleys are those of Maraval and Maraccas; and of the two, perhaps Maraccas is most worth a visit. At its head is a waterfall about three hundred and forty feet in height. After following the road for about nine miles from St Joseph, either by buggy or on foot, you must then take a path which leads up into the mountains through plantations of coffee and cocoa, for about a mile. This path suddenly emerges from the trees at the foot of a gigantic perpendicular cliff covered from head to foot with exquisite ferns and mosses, over which the Maraccas

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River precipitates itself in a silvery cloud into the valley below.

One short week in the island did not allow of any further explorations. The Royal Mail steamer was already waiting to convey her passengers back to Barbados. Most of us were glad to breathe again the invigorating air from off the ocean, after stewing in a moist atmosphere of nearly 90 degrees in the shade. The damp heat of Trinidad is more like that of South America than the climate of the other West Indian islands. For this reason, we were not sorry to go on board, but I think we all hoped we might one day see the forests of Trinidad again. The last thing I remember was an enterprising negro selling walking-sticks of cocoa-nut palm, grou-grou, and other woods to the passengers on board the tender, and doing a very good trade. In another half-hour we were once more on board the s.s. *Solent*, steaming up the Gulf of Paria on the return voyage to Barbados.

CHAPTER V.

ST LUCIA.

ST LUCIA is likely to become the most important of the smaller islands, for it has a fine natural harbour which has no equal in the West Indies. As a rule, rowing ashore in boats with all one's baggage is the programme on the arrival of the mail steamer. At St Lucia, however, there is deep water right up to the quay, and the harbour is at the same time so magnificently sheltered from all quarters as to be very nearly land-locked. We had been steaming lazily along an exquisite coast, white sand and coconut palms lining the edge of the blue water, while the spurs of the mountains sloped upwards from the shore till they ended in fantastic peaks intersected with rich valleys, in which sugar and cacao plantations were visible in the distance.

Gradually we could discern a block of white build-

ings, high up in the hills amongst the dense forests, but overlooking the sea for miles around. Now more houses began to detach themselves from the trees which had concealed them. We were making for a little wooded headland, which we rounded a few minutes later, and the town and harbour of Castries lay before us. The prospect on entering the harbour is very fine. In shape it resembles the letter V, with the ends slightly curved inwards. On the right, at a height of about five hundred feet above the sea, in a commanding position, stands Government House, with the Union Jack floating from the tower. Three hundred feet higher up again, on the summit of the Morne Fortunée, are the Royal Artillery Barracks, the buildings we had first seen. On the left are more barracks crowning the summit of the Vigie, a spur of land enclosing the harbour on the other side. The town itself, with its church in a prominent situation, nestles in the valley at the head of the little bay, with the usual tropical background of mountain and forest. As we drew near the quay signs of energy were apparent which did not exist at Grenada or St Vincent. There were other steamers alongside the quay or at anchor in the harbour, and throngs of people were to be seen awaiting the arrival of the mail.

Passing in and out amongst the usual medley of negroes in outrageous hats, and brawny negresses in diverse colours, were officers mounted on polo ponies, in kharki uniform, with white pith helmets. The scene would have been bright if it had not been for the covering of coal-dust which seemed to envelop everything in its dingy embrace. Dresses and coloured handkerchiefs were reduced to a dead level of grimy black. Large masses of coal were piled up on the quay in the background, and the general aspect bore evidence of the extent to which St Lucia is utilised as a coaling station. After a great deal of apparent waste of time we were moored alongside, and a lively scene took place on the quay, the number of officers and other residents having gradually increased, while greetings between passengers and their friends were going on everywhere. Dr G——, the administrator, had kindly offered me his hospitality during my stay in the island, and his negro servant or orderly was waiting with a pony to take me up to Government House. Buggies are almost unknown in St Lucia, owing to the mountainous character of what few roads there are, so my heavy luggage accomplished the five hundred feet of climbing on the heads of two negro servants.

There are certainly some departments in which they can give the white man the lead.

The town of Castries is extremely disappointing when seen at close quarters. The stores are very inferior to those of Bridgetown, there are no decent pavements, and everything looks gloomy and depressing. If St Lucia is to be the important naval station which it is likely to become, the inhabitants of Castries will certainly have to make a stir.

We crossed the little river and began to ascend the hill by a winding road, sometimes shut in completely by masses of trees, mangoes, tamarinds, and many others I could not put a name to, catching from time to time magnificent glimpses of sea, mountain, and sky. My little pony knew the way so well that I yielded myself up to his guidance, and relieved myself of all responsibility. The position of Government House is second to none in the West Indies. It is built upon a kind of platform at the summit of a lofty eminence, with the ground falling almost sheer down to the level of the harbour below. Beyond is the Vigie, with its lovely green hills surmounted by the white barracks of the West India regiment. Over these again, spur after spur of land juts out into the blue sea. Six miles away is Pigeon Island,

famous for its connection with one of the greatest battles of the British navy. Under the lee of this island Rodney's fleet lay at anchor, while the great English admiral watched the movements of the French fleet at Martinique. In the far distance the crumpled mountains of Martinique are visible in a blue mist, and one's imagination pictures the admiral with his telescope reconnoitring from the summit of the hill, while his fleet lies completely hidden from the French. At last De Grasse was tempted out into the open sea, and Rodney sailed to meet him. The two fleets were almost evenly matched, and the fight was to decide once for all whether England or France should be supreme in the West Indies. Rodney put into practice for the first time the manœuvre of "breaking the line," his own ship the *Formidable* sailing in between the French lines, supported by the *Namur*, the *Duke*, and the *Canada*, all exposed to a terrible fire. The French fleet was split in two, became demoralised, and could not be again combined. Five ships were captured and another sunk. The firing continued almost without intermission from seven in the morning till sunset. De Grasse, on board his own ship, the *Ville de Paris*, fought on long after the battle was really decided,

but at last, when only two besides himself remained on deck unwounded, he gave orders to surrender, and the next day the French commander-in-chief was a prisoner on board the *Formidable*, and the power of the French in the West Indies was broken. The battle stands out in history as the greatest naval battle of the age.

The history of St Lucia may be summed up by saying that it has been tossed backwards and forwards like an india-rubber ball between the English and French Governments. It has been repeatedly captured by the English, and restored to France again by treaty as part of a general partition. The strategic importance of the island was fully recognised by Rodney, who was able to speak from experience, and who advised its retention in preference to Martinique. It was finally recaptured from the French in 1803, during the war which broke out after the Revolution. Since then it has never passed out of our hands, but it retains very obvious relics of its old history. The negroes speak French patois still, and the majority do not understand English. Many of the white people are of French origin, and there are a considerable number of mulattos with French blood in them.

The present Government are now fully alive to the importance of St Lucia, and have decided to strengthen its garrison and fortifications under a scheme for establishing strong naval and military stations in each department of the empire.

The building of fortifications was in full swing during my stay in the island, and the activity of the War Department was soon brought home to me in a somewhat personal and amusing manner. I was attracted by the view from Government House over an exquisite little cove known as Petit Cul de Sac, so determined one morning to find my way down to the beach and sit under the cocoa-nut palms. Turning into a small footpath, I followed the course of the valley through grasses and undergrowth, in mortal terror all the time lest a *fer de lance* should be concealed in the bush. This *fer de lance* is what the black people would call a "bad snake," and is the pest of St Lucia. With the exception of Martinique, it is not found in any other island. It is a hideous and repulsive looking creature, with a flat, triangular head and heavy looking jaw, fully six feet long, and its bite is fatal within an hour unless immediately attended to. I reached the shore, however, in safety, and was standing on the baking white sand wonder-

ing at the marvellous colouring of the sea, when I suddenly became conscious of an intense irritation about the hands and wrists. This had no connection with the War Department, but was due to the presence of innumerable sand-flies, who had taken advantage of my temporary absorption, and were feasting upon me to their hearts' content. They are larger than midges, equally numerous, and more than equally attentive. The glare at the same time was terrific, and I hastily came to the conclusion that the Tropics were supremely uncomfortable, and hurried back up the path I had come by. When about half way up, however, I was met by a shabby-looking negro, who planted himself in the way, and in a strident voice accused me of trespassing on the property of the War Department. I protested my utter ignorance of the fact, and as I was already late endeavoured to waive him aside and get past him; but this was impossible. "You dun got to tell dat to de sergeant-major," he said; "you come dis way." Intensely annoyed, I found myself compelled to climb to the top of the hill in the broiling sun, where I found the gentleman referred to, with an inky black policeman ready to take me into custody. Having explained that I was innocent of all design, that I was

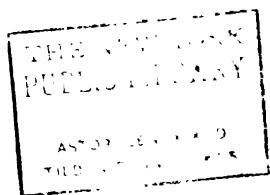
staying at Government House, and had merely gone out for a morning stroll without any sinister motive whatever, I was at length courteously dismissed, the two black constables being dismissed also. If I had not been staying at Government House, I was informed that it would have been necessary to take me before the superior officer and place me under arrest. Dr G——, of course, quite approved of the conduct of the officials, and the incident shows they are thoroughly on the alert. Barracks were being pushed rapidly forward with the object of accommodating troops to be moved to the island from Barbados. These would command the harbour from the east, and with the West India Regiment on the Vigie and the Artillery on the heights of the Morne at the back of the town, it would be well-nigh impossible for a fleet to enter the bay. The extreme narrowness of the mouth would largely increase the difficulty.

From the balcony of Government House the building operations are not in view. One only sees an enchanting panorama of sea, sky, and green hills and islands. Never in any other spot have I seen such brilliancy of colouring to compare with this. Pink and azure and mauve and emerald succeed

one another in streaks across the lovely Caribbean Sea. Ever and anon heavy tropical storms come sweeping down over the mountains, and all is dark and frowning while the rain falls with a roar on the surrounding forests. A few minutes later the sun bursts out again, and here and there amongst the storm clouds are beautiful glimpses of mountain and sea, with wonderful rainbow effects, until gradually all is bright and sparkling as before. To sit on this balcony with a telescope, watching the steamers coming in to coal, was an ideal occupation for a tropical climate. One morning we were following the course of a small trading steamer which was approaching the mouth of the harbour, when she hove to and ran up the yellow flag, indicating that she had a case of yellow fever on board. She was not allowed to enter the harbour, but was obliged to lower her boats. When this was done the coal was taken out in heavy lightermen and shifted into the ship's boats alongside. The boatmen then rowed ashore, and as soon as they were well away the crew began to transfer the coal from their own boats into the hold. All this was clearly visible to us with a telescope. We could also see the crew moving about in the rigging, and felt thankful that



MANGOES AND BANANA PLANTS, ST LUCIA.



we had been spared from being at such close quarters with the terrible "Yellow Jack." I heard afterwards that a death had already occurred, but what became of the poor fellow who was lying at that moment stricken with the disease I never ascertained. The vessel was from Rio, bound for New York. In Rio the disease was raging.

The doctors in the West Indies seldom speak of yellow fever by its old name. They call it "bilious remittent fever" of a malignant type, and they seem to differ considerably as to its exact nature, some holding it to be contagious and others not. There had already been one or two isolated cases in St Lucia, which the Barbadians were making capital out of, for they were not a little sore about the transfer of the troops. This is scarcely to be wondered at, for the action of the Government appears like a death-blow to the prosperity of Barbados, which is already in a precarious state owing to the price of sugar. The strategical position of St Lucia is, as I have said, a very important one, and it is a wise move to strengthen the garrison and fortifications. On the other hand, not only is it a particularly unfavourable moment for withdrawing troops from Barbados, but while a handful of

men could defend Castries, it would be a comparatively easy matter to land troops on the leeward coast of Barbados, in the absence of a strong garrison to resist them. Again, there is no doubt whatever as to the superiority of the climate of Barbados, where forest and swamp no longer exist, and fever is almost unknown.

St Lucia is not an unhealthy island, but it still contains a large area of uncultivated ground, and some of the low-lying tracts are swampy. The fact that soldiers were being sent to Barbados to be acclimatised speaks for itself. Anyhow, there was a good deal of jealousy between the two islands during my visit to them, and the cry of yellow fever had already led to the appointment of a Commission to investigate the matter.

Although St Lucia is not quite so healthy as Barbados, which is the sanatorium of the West Indies, it is, as I have said, not notably unhealthy, and there is a decided opening for men with a little capital to go out as planters. At present three-quarters of the surface of the island is uncultivated, but the soil and climate are perfectly adapted for coffee and cocoa planting. Besides this, fruit and vegetables could be grown to a large extent for the

neighbouring islands of Martinique and Barbados, both of which are almost entirely given up to sugar, and import products from America with which St Lucia could well supply them. A botanical station has now been created in Castries, at which coffee, cocoa, and other plants can be bought at low prices by planters. This has already been much used. The Crown lands can be obtained at £1 an acre, this being the upset price, and the purchase money is allowed to be paid in annual instalments for five years. There are many other advantages which it is impossible to enumerate here, but which ought to be sufficient to tempt young men who have a little money, and enjoy an active out-door life.

One of the results of the building operations was a matter of personal experience. The mosquitoes were stirred up in swarms, and being turned out of comfortable quarters, they set themselves to worry the life out of unoffending strangers. Day and night, in-doors and out-of-doors, there was no respite from them! I used to sit in the drawing-room at Government House, at an afternoon reception, trying to talk pleasantly, until sting after sting on my wrists, cheeks, and temples, drove me to such desperation that I could have shrieked with frenzy.

When writing letters it was necessary to barricade one's feet and ankles with rugs, coats, or anything else which was handy. We had to convert our arms into a species of windmill. The next day complete disfiguration was not infrequently the result, only to be repeated in a slightly varied form, as the time passed pleasantly by. I could almost believe the story of an American fellow-traveller, who informed me that at some miraculous place in the States, the mosquitoes were so thick that horses were suffocated through getting them up their noses. At the time I was incredulous, but bitter experience made me feel that there were more things in this world than had been dreamed of in my philosophy.

There is in St Lucia another pest in addition to its dreaded *fer de lance* and its special breed of mosquitoes, whose predatory habits are so exceptionally developed. I refer to the mongoose, whose introduction into the island is a striking instance of the short-sightedness of man. Until comparatively recently it was quite unknown in the West Indies, but was brought from Africa to fight and exterminate the *fer de lance*. Now that Mr Rudyard Kipling's "Jungle Book" is so well known, it is almost superfluous to describe the appearance of

this cunning and active little creature. It is perhaps about half as large again as a good sized rat, and very like one, with the exception that the body is covered with fur and the tail is bushy. The principal aim and object of the mongoose is to kill snakes, and the greater part of its life is spent in fighting them. When the snake raises its head to strike, the mongoose makes a spring and fastens its teeth in its adversary's throat, almost invariably coming off victorious. Since its introduction to St Lucia it appears to have made some headway, but it has also turned its attention to the domestic poultry yards in the island to such an extent that some of the inhabitants bitterly rue the day when the first mongoose landed on their shores.

I had only been two or three days at Government House, when one morning I heard a most appalling tumult of shrieks and all kinds of guttural sounds at the back of the house. Had I been in East London, I should have thought some terrible domestic tragedy was being enacted. The whole household turned out in some excitement when it was discovered that a mongoose had made a raid on the poultry in broad daylight, within view of the kitchen window. It had seized by the leg an

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unfortunate old hen, who, being no longer in her first youth, was unable to make good her escape in time. Her cries for help brought all the black servants to the spot, from the cook downwards, and they joined in the chorus. Geese and guinea-fowls put in a word too, until one of the grooms arrived with a weapon, and the mongoose seeing the game was up, relinquished his hold and fled. As for the poor hen, she lived to tell the tale, but will be lame for many a long day.

At Government House the ponies are made great pets of. One of them was very kindly singled out for my especial use, and I soon became quite attached to it. These "Creole" ponies, as they are called, are excellent little animals, very sure-footed, and, though quiet, always ready for a good gallop on the sea-shore. It is not wise, however, to venture on the sands at random, for in some places there are quicksands, which would swallow up horse and rider in a very short space of time. In St Lucia nearly everybody rides, for except along the sea-shore round Castries there are scarcely any carriage roads in the island, and the country is so mountainous that if the roads were made they would be like the roofs of houses. It was a most novel sight to see

the ladies riding up on their ponies in little cavalcades to the receptions at Government House, which took place every Tuesday afternoon. Tennis on a gravel court was followed by music in the drawing-room, after which the guests gradually dispersed.

Many of the St Lucians are of French origin still. Sometimes this is evident from their appearance or accent, more often still from their names. Some of them complained bitterly of the life there, saying it was one continued round of tennis and dancing, and at every house you saw the same people. To me they appeared so vivacious that it was difficult to realise they were anything but supremely happy; and probably in spite of their grumblings they are happier than many of their English neighbours. Where the numbers are small and people set a greater value upon each other's company, there are bound, of course, to be feuds here and there, but there is more chance of genuine friendships, and less of that stiffness and indifference towards others which is characteristic of a larger society. No: I may perhaps have been mistaken, but I felt more inclined to envy them than otherwise. Also, there is always the garrison to infuse a little fresh blood into the island.

One afternoon during my visit there was a large gathering at the Morne for tennis, etc., but heavy tropical showers saturated the courts. In a few minutes the mess-room was cleared, and dancing was in full swing. There is certainly a great deal of "go" about life in the colonies. People meet together to enjoy themselves, and not merely to make and receive impressions. Hostesses do not merely horde their guests for the sake of making a big show, but they take pains to make the time pass pleasantly.

The view from the Morne is magnificent. There is a sense of expansion which makes one feel that a single half-hour would work miracles for some of the thousands buried in our smoky cities at home. The thought of the contrast between such a scene as this and a landscape at Bermondsey or Shoreditch, makes one marvel that man should be either able or willing so to disfigure the face of Nature. Still sadder is the thought that millions spend their whole lives inexorably surrounded by ugliness, and never see Nature in her true garb. Eight hundred feet below lay the tropical sea, stretching away to the east, south, and west, and hidden only on the north by the central range of

mountains, which rose in a cluster of peaks rich in forest against the brilliant sky.

A day or two afterwards I cantered up the hill in evening-dress, on a bright starlight night, to dine at the mess. The fire-flies flashed out incessantly against the deep blackness of the trees as they circled in the air around one's head, and the whole air resounded with the chorus of insect life. The frogs, rejoicing in the rain which had fallen that day in torrents, kept up an incessant song, in which myriads of crickets joined. Every now and then the strange hoarse chuckle of the chack-chack sounded above the rest. This creature is very like a locust, and makes a noise with its wing-cases like a dry chuckle. "Chack, chack, chack," is the nearest approach to the sound; hence the name given to it by the natives. It is not always easy to see one at close quarters, but one evening we heard the noise very much louder than usual, and after a search discovered the songster on the window-frame, just outside the glass. He was quite indifferent to our curiosity, so we were able to examine the wing-cases as they opened and shut. At close quarters the noise was more like that of a wooden rattle.

I had so far only explored the country immediately around Castries, but through the kindness of Mr P——, Chief of Police in the island, I was able to see something of the windward coast before leaving, and also to see a little more of West Indian life. It so happened that Mr P—— was riding over the mountains on the following Saturday, to stay over Sunday with a well-known sugar planter, Mr H——, at La Caye, in order to visit the police station at the neighbouring town of Dennery. He very kindly suggested that I should accompany him, and my reluctance to inflict myself so unexpectedly on Mr H——'s hospitality being ridiculed, it was arranged that we should set out at nine o'clock on Saturday morning.

The ponies at Government House were not equal to the three hours' ride over the mountains. I was however able to hire a horse in Castries, and after breakfasting at Mr and Mrs P——'s, where we were joined by one of the officers at the Morne, we set out at the time agreed upon. Our route lay through Castries, and then for some distance along a beautiful shady road which winds its way through a rich valley towards the mountains. Leaving the town behind us, and catching a glimpse

of the cricket ground through the branches of magnificent trees, we began the ascent. The road became steeper and narrower, until it degenerated into a mere bridle path. As we got nearer to the mountains, the luxuriance of the vegetation increased. Sharp peaks and ridges and steep precipices were all covered with forest. Lovely ferns and flowers grew all along the roadside. We climbed over ridges, and wound round shoulders of mountains, the summits of which towered above us on all sides to a height of about four thousand feet. We had ridden up and down some hills which would sorely have perplexed any horse not accustomed to West Indian geographical conditions, and we had been riding about three-quarters of an hour when we reached the foot of the Barra-Barra hill. This had been described to me as one of the wonders of the place, and indeed the first part of the road was like Rotten Row by comparison. Up and up and round and round we went in single file, feeling very much (at least, I speak for myself) as though we were climbing to the top of St Paul's Cathedral on horse-back in a dream. Steep banks and dense bushes and undergrowth separated us from the outside world. There was only just room for one person to ride.

Underfoot the path consisted of a slippery clay alternating with bare ledges of equally slippery rock. It is marvellous that the horses are able to find a footing, but they no doubt have muscles specially adapted to climbing. Once, in an almost impossible place, mine stumbled badly, and I expected we should find ourselves rolling over and over each other to the bottom. The prospect was a somewhat disquieting one, and I was relieved, though equally surprised, to find that we had recovered ourselves. About half-way up the girths had become loose, and I discovered that the saddle was several inches nearer to my horse's tail. This was only one degree better than rolling together to the bottom, and until we reached a convenient spot it was necessary to hang on to his mane to avoid parting company altogether. Happily he did not resent this proceeding, and we reached the top safely, and to all appearances amicably.

We were now at a height of some twelve or thirteen hundred feet, and in the very heart of the forests. Here for the first time I saw tree-ferns, and in beauty both of form and colour I know of nothing to surpass them. Hundreds of them grew on both sides, shooting up wherever there was room for them

in the thickness of the forest. The tall, slender stem is quite unadorned, until, at about fifteen or twenty feet from the ground, it bursts into wide-spreading fronds of an exquisite green, and of the most delicate texture. The rays of the sun shining through the foliage give them the appearance of beautiful lace-work, and the lightness of the colouring contrasts in a striking manner with the sombre green of the big forest trees. One seems to see the fairies dancing under their shade, with the sunbeams falling now and again on their little figures as they pass in and out amongst the stems.

After a short rest, the horses were as fresh as ever, and for some distance the path was level, with a sandy surface. The air was most exhilarating, and we cantered for some distance along the ridge, catching lovely glimpses from time to time of sea and valley beneath us. Suddenly the path took a dive, as it were, downwards, for we had reached the beginning of the descent to the windward coast. This was even more precipitous than the path we had come up, for the valley lay 1200 feet below us, and we were at the bottom in less than a mile. My horse seemed to be sliding gently over slippery rocks a great part

of the time, and myself to be sliding over his head to the ground. This was a trifle better than slipping backwards over his tail, but at the same time somewhat disquieting.

At the foot of the mountain there stretched before us a broad rich valley, covered with those patches of brilliant green which had now become so familiar, the historical sugar-cane fields of the West Indian planters. The mountains rose abruptly, like colossal cliffs on either side, and in the centre a little stream wound its way lazily towards the sea. Huts were dotted about here and there, and in the distance, about half a mile from the sea-shore, we could see the tall chimney of Mr H——'s usine. At the bottom we found a tolerable road. The horses were glad to stretch their legs, and we galloped through the sugar canes for about a mile, till we pulled up at the house, which stands on a little hillock in the middle of the valley. It is a wooden structure designed by himself, and sent to the spot in pieces, which were put together under his own supervision. On the north and east are broad, airy verandahs, well protected from the tropical sun, and open to the full sweep of the trade-winds as they come up the valley from the sea.

If Mr H—— was surprised at my appearance he certainly did not betray it. Silencing any attempt at apology or explanation with the remark that "he was always glad to see a white skin," he treated me from that moment as if he had known me all his life. No doubt any white face is a welcome sight to him, for his house is miles from anything but negro huts and the sugar usine which lay in the hollow below us. The Barra-Barra hill is often impassable in the wet season, and with the exception of an occasional steamer or sailing vessel which puts into Dennery from time to time, it is the only pathway to civilisation.

We breakfasted at twelve o'clock in Continental fashion, this being the usual custom in St Lucia as well as in Trinidad. Mr H—— is a bachelor, and keeps as a kind of cook-housekeeper a coloured woman, who struck me as one of the quaintest of all the grotesque characters I came across. She was something between a mulatto and a negress, the skin being sallow, and the features more nearly approaching the negro type. Her nose was flat with wide nostrils, and her eyes had the unmistakable roll of the negress. Round her head she wore a coloured handkerchief, tied in a bow after

the fashion of the Martinican women. Her dress was tied round with a coloured sash above the waist. To describe her appearance is a comparatively easy task, but I doubt whether any description would reproduce her singular bearing and demeanour. She would sail into the room like an empress, holding the dish at arm's length, with her chest thrown out magnificently and her head thrown backwards. On her face was an expression of lofty contempt for everything and everybody. Every now and then she would toss her head proudly by way of emphasising her dignity. My companions were evidently accustomed to derive considerable amusement from her, and whiled away the time with a running fire of little jokes at her expense. At these she tossed her head more contemptuously still, and then to my astonishment burst into sudden explosions of laughter. These were followed by a hasty exit, and when she reappeared her pompousness was so overwhelming as to be a silent warning to any person who should presume to address her. She spoke fluently in French patois, but deigned to exchange a few words with me in what she was pleased to consider English. Mr H—— employed a species of clipped French, also designed by himself, to meet the requirements

of the coloured population. Parisian French would have been unintelligible to them. As for me, I scarcely dared address any remarks to this strange creature at all, but sat gazing upon her as if she were a being from some other world. She did not trouble herself to master my name, but I was easily identified as "Mr Gentleman here," and passed under that name during the rest of my visit.

After "lazing" for some time on the verandah, we all made our way down to the usine, which is one of the best, fitted with every modern invention in machinery, to be seen in the West Indies. With such an efficient guide as Mr H——, we spent a most interesting and instructive hour examining the various processes in the manufacture of sugar, the only drawback being the heat, which was almost unbearable.

The negroes carry in the cane stalks and place them on what is called a "feed table" or sliding platform, which carries them automatically into the crushing-mill. This vigorous machine soon crushes all the juice out of them. The canes themselves are then removed to a drying-room and thoroughly drained, after which they are used as fuel. Our interest now becomes centred in the juice, which is

pumped into large tanks. These have the appearance of reservoirs of treacle, enough to supply London for a generation. The juice is not allowed to remain here long, but after being mixed with a small proportion of bisulphate of lime, which looks very like Devonshire cream, it flows on into troughs, and thence into the clarifiers or large tanks, in which it is kept for about half an hour. More lime is then added, and all the impurities gradually fall to the bottom. We were shown two small bottles containing specimens of the juice before and after the clarifying process, one being a thick syrup and the other a perfectly clear liquid with a sediment at the bottom. Passing through bag filters, it is still further deprived of all extraneous matter. To reach the clarifiers we had to climb ladders and pass along planks close to the roof of the factory. The juice falls through bag filters into what is known as the copper wall, an evaporating pan in which it is boiled again into a dense syrup. Its troubles are not nearly over yet, and the next step is to convey what is now a syrup into a cylindrical vessel called a vacuum-pan, in which it remains for several hours, until it is considered to be sufficiently concentrated. A comparatively restful period follows, during which the poor syrup is

allowed to take things quietly in wooden coolers before being again whirled into action. The hardest work is yet to follow. When sufficiently cooled it is carried by copper pipes into the "centrifugal machines," and by these it is whirled round and round at the rate of about 1200 revolutions a minute. The latest of these wonderful inventions is lined inside with perforated copper, which intensifies the violence of the process. In a very short time the sugar begins to crystallise and fall to the bottom, while the remainder of the syrup is carried off, and is now known as "molasses." The sugar is packed at once in hogsheads, and is ready to be shipped off to Europe or America. So rapidly does the machinery work, that the canes are sometimes brought in in the morning and the sugar is shipped before night. I was struck by the manner in which these ignorant negroes moved in and out amongst some of the most highly developed mechanical contrivances of the age, taking everything as a matter of course. There was something strangely incongruous in the scene. At one end of the building was an East Indian coolie prowling about like a cat, with eyes that seemed to take in every movement of the negroes. We were told that he was stationed there to watch them, and

to see that they did not secrete any of the cane or sugar about their persons. The coolie is very much sharper than his African cousin, and there is less chance of his making common cause with the thief. I certainly would not have risked much myself with those eyes anywhere within sight of me. As for the negroes, their consciences are sometimes rather shaky where the Eighth Commandment is concerned.

The next day we rode over to Dennergy, where Mr P—— had to inspect the local police station. On our way back we turned off the main road on to some rough uneven ground for a gallop on the seashore, when we came suddenly upon a shabby-looking negro carrying a suspicious bundle over his shoulder. He was instantly ordered to open it, but it was found to contain nothing but chaff, and our black friend seemed to have scored. One of the party, however, had seen him take something from his mouth and throw it hastily into some wild guava bushes close by. "Go and fetch what you have just thrown into the bushes," he said, in a very quiet voice, pointing to the spot. The negro hesitated, looked dogged and sullen, then saw it was no use to attempt any more dodges. He accordingly went back and picked up the mysterious object, which turned out to be a piece

of cane which he had succeeded in pilfering from the usine. It was a piece of bad luck to meet the chief of police and the company's manager at the same time. He was told to report himself, which meant that he would have to pay a suitable fine. The whole transaction seemed to me more like punishing a naughty child than dealing officially with a criminal.

Dennery is little more than a long, straggling village of negro huts, with a church, a police station, a rum-shop, and the tropical beach within a few yards of the street. An hour was quite sufficient for a visit to this dreary town. We were, however, delayed for a short time there in consequence of a mule which one of our party was riding having got a stone in his hoof, which he objected to having removed. After several vain attempts had been made, it was decided to lift the other leg off the ground. The law of gravitation would then make it inconvenient to kick. One of the black police now took hold of the remaining hoof, but the mule was above being obstructed by any of the laws of nature. He "let out" vigorously, with the result that all the operators fled, and the unlucky constable got a nasty kick on the wrist. An old negro who had not witnessed the operation was approached with a view to making another effort, but

he was not to be tempted. "I no do dat," he said, shaking his head sagaciously; "he go kick, he go kill me." So in the end the mule came off victorious.

We passed numbers and numbers of blacks trudging into Dennergy for morning service, the women all carrying bundles on their heads. These mysterious bundles contained all their best Sunday finery, and when they reach the town they immediately repair to the rum-shops, where toilets are made. After service is over a magnificent Church parade takes place, followed by parties at the various rum-shops. Then they begin their homeward march, some on foot, some on donkeys and mules, and not a few more than half-seas over. It would be wrong, however, to convey the idea that the blacks are more intemperate than our own race. Generally speaking they are less so, but their light-heartedness causes them to run riot occasionally. From the verandah we watched the progress of a middle-aged negro gentleman on a small donkey. He was visible to us for quite half a mile, and was swaying so far out of the perpendicular as to be in danger every moment of being left behind in the road. After many hairbreadth escapes, he rounded the corner in safety.

With regard to their love of finery, one can but feel that human nature is very much alike all the world over. There is some difference, no doubt, in taste, and gorgeous bonnets do not suit woolly heads, but otherwise Dennery is like most west-end churches. Most of the people are religious too, but in an ignorant and childish way, and many of their old superstitions and beliefs are curiously worked in.

An amusing incident served to while away part of the afternoon. We were seated outside smoking, when a very fine pig made its appearance about 160 yards off, apparently on a voyage of discovery on the company's estate. Mr H—— immediately called for a gun and ammunition, and on my expressing surprise, explained that any one was legally entitled to shoot pigs or goats which were found straying on his property. This seemed to me a drastic remedy, but no doubt it is the one best suited to the conditions of the country. Several shots having failed to bring down the pig, "Mr Shoot," the black groom, was despatched with what he himself described as a two-chimney gun, to stalk it amongst the guava bushes. By this time all the village had turned out to see the fun, and were gathered in a body on the hill opposite. But the

pig had apparently been stalked before, for he made off at an incredible pace. Mr Shoot was creeping towards him like a panther. He fired and missed, but the pig foolishly kept in the open, and he fired again. This time the unhappy animal doubled into the bushes, and the last thing I remember seeing was a picture of the village people searching amongst the guavas while darkness was gradually setting in. Mr Shoot on his return explained excitedly, and with indescribable gestures, how "e go down like dat," though the pig had not appeared to me to go down at all. Whether the latter died peacefully in the bush, or was found by the villagers, remained a mystery.

The next morning we rode back over the Barra-Barra hill to Castries. Heavy showers had made the road more difficult than before, and storm-clouds were still hovering about in a threatening manner. When we reached the foot of the hill large drops began to fall, and we were prepared for one of those drenching storms for which the tropics are famous. However, we had only taken shelter under the trees for a short time when the sky cleared, and the clouds rolled away before the wind. As we mounted the hill in single file, the horses slipping

and recovering themselves every minute, we seemed to be literally balanced one on the top of the other, so steep is the gradient and so sharp the angle. The sun now shone out gloriously, and as we rode along the top of the ridge to the Morne, some seven or eight hundred feet above the sea, the glimpses of sea and valley were more beautiful than ever. Here we parted, and I rode on to Government House, arriving in time for breakfast.

No one should think of leaving St Lucia without seeing its famous Pitons, which have been regarded as amongst the world's greatest wonders. It so happened that Mr P—— was going on the following Wednesday to Souffrière, which is situated some twenty or thirty miles down the coast, and is reached by coasting steamers from Castries. He again kindly suggested that if I would accompany him I should not only have a fine view of the Pitons, which are close to Souffrière, but should have an opportunity of visiting the group of sulphur springs, or semi-extinct volcanoes, for which the island is famous.

The trade-wind was blowing freshly as we steamed out of Castries harbour, and the air was fresh and exhilarating. Hugging the coast all the way, we

passed wooded cliffs and little hamlets nestling under the cocoa-nut palms, with forests stretching upward till the summits of the mountains were lost in cloud. The sea all around was alive with fish jumping, and scores of dolphins followed the little steamer, leaping several feet into the air, and turning over and over in the clear water. We also sighted a whale, unusually near to the beach, which is in some places exceedingly steep, and once also I saw the fin of a shark a few hundred yards away, pointing straight upwards, as only the shark's fin does. Curiously, this was the only occasion on which I was aware of being in close proximity, although I bathed several times from a boat off the coast of Martinique and Dominica.

Round the spur of a mountain we found ourselves face to face with the Pitons, and the prospect fairly took away one's breath. Standing side by side like two colossal lions, they guard the entrance to the harbour of Souffrière. Straight from the water's edge they rise precipitously to a height of about three thousand feet. One is almost completely detached from the mainland. Awful precipices and dense masses of tropical vegetation alternate with each other from the water's edge to the summit.



THE PITONS, ST LUCIA.

Page 142.



The little town of Souffrière lies peacefully at the head of a lovely bay under shelter of its gigantic sentries. Behind it again is the Piton des Canaries, with its summit lost in cloud. When Kingsley wrote his "At Last!" no one was known to have ever reached the top of either of the Pitons. There was a story of some of Rodney's sailors who attempted it, and dropped one after another from the bite of the *fer de lance*, who was sunning himself on the well-nigh inaccessible ledges. One man alone reached the goal, and was seen to wave the Union Jack before he fell exhausted and perished with the rest. Since then the ascent of the Petits Pitons has been accomplished in quite recent times by an adventurous party, some of whom were experienced in Alpine climbing.

They found obstacles at least equal to those of the snow mountains. In these tropical latitudes the climbing of a mountain generally entails a long and almost hopeless struggle through the dense bush. Ferns and grasses and shrubs make progress well-nigh impossible. After hours of fighting with the masses of undergrowth, the traveller emerges at last, wet to the skin and often covered with scratches. What little clothing he has is almost in shreds. In

the open he is subjected to the full force of the tropical sun, which beats with relentless force on the bare rock, and he has to run the risk of being drenched in one of those sudden downpours which are peculiar to these latitudes.

Landing at Souffrière, we put up at the Star Hotel, a very quaint little inn in the rambling village street. The presiding genius was a portly mulatto woman of the French type, who rejoiced in the name of *Asterie Clausan*. The names of these people are frequently more euphonious and more artistic than their voices or personal appearance. Mme. Clauzan assumed the dignity of an empress among her more dusky attendants. These were numerous, but I quite failed to discover what their respective duties were supposed to be. They seemed to have plenty of leisure for staring at us, and for rolling their eyes as only negresses can. Mr P—— apparently inspired them with awe, and it was evident that his word was absolute law to them. He dictated an inviting menu, and I verily believe they would have searched the island rather than fail to produce every item of it. The consequence was that we sat down to a very excellent dinner, consisting of flying-fish, chicken and stewed

guavas, with sapodillas, custard apples, and bananas for dessert.

Early in the afternoon we hired two horses from the police station, and set out for the famous sulphur springs. The road climbs the side of a mountain and then turns inland. After riding for a mile we reached a spot from which one of the grandest views of the Pitons burst suddenly upon us. The bases were hidden by the shoulder of another mountain, and the twin peaks appeared almost perfect in their symmetry. Only the upper heights being visible, they looked all the more mysterious. The air was getting more and more charged with sulphur. Presently we turned off the road and threaded our way down a narrow path into the valley below. We had not gone far before I became conscious of a low roar, which seemed to come from underneath us. As we advanced the sound increased in volume, and was accompanied by a loud hissing noise, which sounded like innumerable engines simultaneously letting off steam. Suddenly we came to a clearing in the bush, and there, down in the valley below, was a horrible scene. For a considerable distance all vegetation was destroyed by the fumes, and the ground consisted of a cake of

sulphur. Here and there great jets of steam and sulphur-smoke shot up out of the earth, and we could easily perceive the origin of the weird noises which filled the whole air around us. I made my way down to the bottom of the valley to inspect the springs at close quarters, but the atmosphere was too suffocating to admit of a very long stay. It is necessary to be very careful not to slip, unless one is anxious to be boiled alive. The gas was bubbling up through noxious-looking pools, throwing off volumes of steam, and making a horrible noise, the larger springs resembling boiling cauldrons. I was soon glad to get back to the pure air of the mountains, feeling as if I had had a glimpse of Dante's *Inferno*. Mme. Clauzan was one of those people who consider mosquito curtains an affectation. This is unfortunate from the point of view of her guests, and after a night of frenzy I woke up (only there was very little to wake up from) to find the geological formation of my hands and face had undergone considerable modification. We left again by the coasting steamer next morning, ploughing our way through a choppy sea back to Castries.

The following day was mail day, and it was with

regret that I took leave of my hospitable friends, and set sail again for Barbados. Nor can anyone leave these lovely islands, with their mountains and forests and wonderful sunlight, without experiencing the sense of a great loss—a feeling that something is fading away and passing out of one's life.

The little bay was alive with boats and bright with the costumes of the ladies, for there was quite a *conversazione* on board, so many had come to wish their friends "God speed." Then the bell rang, and all visitors began to file down the gangway. Soon the flotilla of boats was on its way to the shore. Jokes were flying around, and hats and handkerchiefs waving as the good ship got under weigh. These little scenes in West Indian harbours dwell long in one's memory after much else has been forgotten.

CHAPTER VI.

MARTINIQUE AND DOMINICA.

ONE Monday evening, at five o'clock, I set sail again for St Lucia, this time *en route* to Martinique and Dominica, taking with me as travelling companion a son of Mr H——, of Bridgetown, Barbados, whom I will refer to as V. The boats, with their black oarsmen, were pulling back across the bay to Bridgetown, the sun was sinking amidst pink and golden clouds into a glassy sea, and as we turned slowly round, the *Don* was moving away from us on her outward journey to Jamaica with the English mails. As night came on the heat in the cabins was so great as to render sleep impossible, and most of the men were to be seen sprawling about the deck in pyjamas. The air was balmy and delicious, but the hard boards were not intended to court sleep, and deck-chairs were not

much better. However, between three and four in the morning we were rewarded by another grand view of the wonderful Pitons by moonlight. A soft blue haze enveloped them, giving a certain indefiniteness which was more pleasing than the hard outline under a searching tropical sun. The splash of the water round the steamer's bows, as we moved lazily along, seemed to add to the general feeling of calm. Like two sleeping giants the Pitons towered above us, no longer frowning as in the daytime, but as though lulled to sleep by the soft moonlight.

We, too, slept again, as soon as we could tear ourselves away, until we found we were nearing Castries at daybreak. After a wait of two hours there, we steamed again out of its beautiful little harbour, and set our course for the French island. A dim outline of volcanic mountains far away on the horizon was already visible, and as we plunged along, through the now ruffled water, the peaks began to detach themselves, as it were, from one another, and to stand out magnificently against the deep blue sky. In about three hours we passed the first spur of land, and then coasted along for another hour, until we came in sight of St Pierre, where the mail steamers call. Long stretches of

green sloped down to the sea-line from lonely peaks and crags of all kinds of fantastic shapes. The wealth of vegetation is perhaps not so great as in St Lucia or St Vincent, but nowhere are the outlines of the mountains grander or more imposing. Nor have I seen any town which looks more picturesque from the sea than St Pierre. Two magnificent mountains rise up on each side of it, sweeping down in long stretches of what looks like moorland, but is really covered with tropical growth. The red roofs of the houses, rising in tiers from the sea, add colour, which is often wanting in West Indian towns, and the twin towers of the Roman Catholic cathedral give an impression of culture and refinement. The usual fleet of rowing boats, with their black occupants, surrounded the steamer immediately on the firing of the gun, and the tumult of absolutely unintelligible jargon that followed, suggested the parrot-house at the Zoological Gardens. Stalwart negroes struggled up the gangway, chattering excitedly in French patois, and making frantic signs to passengers on deck. They reached the top, only to be pushed down again by one of the ship's officers, who, when he found words useless, did not hesitate to use

physical force. One particularly persistent boatman received a resounding blow on the top of his head from a piece of wood, but as the skull of a negro is like cast iron, he took it quite indifferently. We chose one who could speak a little pigeon English, and after struggling through the Customs arrived at the Hotel des Bains. I was at once struck by its resemblance to a typical hotel in a French country town. Inside was a courtyard with little tables ranged about, at which the Martinicans, both white and coloured, sat smoking, drinking, and playing dominoes. In the centre was a tank containing carp and gold fish, and some curious West Indian fish with beautiful scales, like a coat of mail. The landlord was a coloured man, but with all the gestures and attitudes of a French innkeeper.

The guiding spirit, however, was Euphémie François, head waitress, matron, and general factotum of the establishment, a funny little creature about four feet high, who bustled about with an energy quite in contrast to the usual lazy movements of the negro. She wore a coloured dress with a gorgeous flower pattern, a coloured handkerchief round her head tied in a bow, with the ends sticking out ostentatiously, and another round her neck and

pinned across the dress in front. She was never idle for a moment, and hurried about with a pre-occupied air, and a napkin thrown over her shoulder.

Visitors must conform strictly to regulations if they wish to remain in favour with Euphémie. We ourselves were very severely reprimanded one morning for not going down to our bath quickly enough, and were given to understand, with many gestures, that we must not let it occur again. But we got into still greater disgrace when she overheard us discussing her. "I hear you say dat woman! What you say?—*dat woman!*" and she bustled away to the other end of the room without waiting for an answer. In another minute she had apparently forgotten all about it, and came back to us suffused with smiles, or rather with one very broad grin. The dinners at the Hotel des Bains were a strange caricature of French cooking. We could not adapt ourselves to them, and gave further offence to Euphémie by requesting her to hastily remove some "bull's blood" which she had brought us for an entrée. On the whole, however, we were the best of friends, and she would pat us on the shoulder in a patronising way as she told us what the next course was to be.

Finally, we won her heart completely by taking her portrait in front of the hotel.

The streets of St Pierre are brighter and more European-looking than in most of the English islands, and there are remarkably few really black faces to be seen. Most of the people are coloured with an evident vein of French blood. The women walk with great dignity, holding up their skirts with one hand, their dresses caught up by a girdle above the ordinary waist, and their heads decked with coloured handkerchiefs tied in magnified bows. The men seemed to us to be distinctly inferior; many of them were loafing about on the Boulevard in front of the sea, chattering and laughing like baboons, and every now and then there was a free fight, the tactics of which were truly remarkable. They rushed at one another with their heads down, and clawed each other about, until they finally emerged with most of their scanty clothing in shreds. We saw several citizens marched off by *gens d'armes* as a *finale* to these performances. Probably the impending elections were the disturbing element, for we afterwards heard that only two days later there were serious riots in the streets, revolvers and cutlasses being freely

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used, and more than one person killed. This may have been an exaggeration, but no doubt election time is not a peaceful period in Martinique. The town is well supplied with water from the mountains which surround it, and the gutters are kept well flushed, while mops at the ends of long poles are used to keep solid matter from collecting. This mountain water is utilised for some very elaborate shower-baths attached to some alms-houses in the centre of the town, which we were told we ought to visit. The pressure is tremendous, and veritable water-spouts are turned upon one from all directions. The sensation is such as to suggest being riddled with a volley of small shot, and it requires some effort of will to place oneself deliberately in the line of fire. A coloured gentleman, who is master of the ceremonies, turns a powerful garden-hose upon the victim, whose efforts to escape are unavailing. It was only by telling me, with a prodigious grin, that I was a "coward man" that he induced me to go through the whole performance.

One of the three days at our disposal we spent in a visit to Morne Rouge. There was not a pony to be had in the island, and we were bound to fall back upon a very shaky-looking buggy, of somewhat

primitive construction, in order to reach the village. It is a famous drive, and the panoramic views are exceedingly fine. For some distance we followed the course of the river in a deep rocky gorge, the water almost hidden by a thick growth of ferns and shrubs. Then we climbed for some miles over green shoulders of mountains, while every now and then a magnificent picture opened out before us, with the blue sea sparkling in the brilliant sunlight and the bright green of the sugar-cane fields, and the houses of St Pierre fringing the shore. Morne Rouge itself stands on a kind of table-land in a very exposed situation, and suffered terribly in the hurricane of 1891, almost every house being unroofed, and the church greatly damaged. There is something stern and almost forbidding about the scenery here. The mountains are not softened by any covering of forest, but rise bleak and bare on every side. We climbed up and up till we reached a quaint Calvary standing on the brow of a hill, and overlooking a truly superb panorama of mountain and sea. Then we began the descent to St Pierre by a different route, threading our way down the side of a mountain into a fertile valley below. Suddenly the road became precipitous, and

our driver lashed up the horses and prepared to make a dash down the hill. I have certainly never experienced a more remarkable drive than that which he treated us to during the next quarter of an hour. Our buggy was apparently on the eve of coming to pieces before we started. In a few minutes we were plunging down an almost perpendicular hill, with deep trenches crossing the road at right angles and at frequent intervals. On our right was the side of the mountain, and on our left we looked sheer down through a tangle of shrubs and dense undergrowth into the valley below. The horses were pulling away from each other at a tangent, and were scrambling like mad things to keep their footing, when suddenly the harness broke, and one of them was as nearly as possible precipitated into the ravine, dragging all the rest of us with him. Here we scrambled out as best we could, with our bones almost shaken out of our skins, and we refused to go near that buggy again until we got to a decent road. We got the harness patched up somehow, and together, with the buggy at a respectable distance, we proceeded cautiously to the bottom of the hill. All around us as we drove home were tree-ferns taller and more numerous than I had yet

seen them, with their slim graceful stems spreading out into folds of exquisite green above our heads, and here and there were palms of various kinds, while mangoes, bread-fruit trees, and bananas clustered about our path. So beautiful, indeed, were the scenes which opened out on all sides of us, that we almost forgot the shocks we had sustained, and even our miserably uncomfortable quarters, with a very dirty negro sandwiched between us on a seat only intended for two. The buggy just did not fall to pieces before we reached the hotel.

Not being able to hire ponies or procure a reasonably comfortable conveyance, we did not attempt any more expeditions into the interior, but spent the rest of our time in cruising about the bay, and endeavouring to obtain a few specimens of tropical fish. Our boatman was a tall, square-built, finely made negro, who could speak a little English and was intelligent. He had with him a boy of nineteen or twenty, who was clearly of Indian descent. The latter's face was a kind of copper colour, and instead of the usual flat nose and thick lips of the negro, he had slightly aquiline features, and square straight forehead. We rowed ashore close to the fish-market to get a supply of fish for

bait. Here a fisherman was to have some ready for us, and our boatman sprang ashore to make terms and to procure it; but the wily fisherman had found a good customer, and had sold his fish, whereupon a fierce altercation ensued between them. Meanwhile we amused ourselves by throwing six-pences for some little bronze-coloured negro boys, who were paddling round us in flimsy little canoes, roughly made with match-wood. As the coin sinks slowly through the clear water, they spring in after it like frogs, and catch it long before it reaches the bottom; then they rise to the surface, and placing it in their mouths wait for another. I began to fear that we should not get our bait, but the boatman was equal to the occasion. He sighted another negro fishing with an old rod from the beach, and while the latter was intent on playing a fish, he pounced on his little pile on the beach behind him, seized one, and made for the boat. We did not half like being parties to such a bare-faced robbery, but we came to the conclusion that we had better shrug our shoulders over it, and be thankful for our good fortune, for these people seem to understand each other. Our good fortune did not carry us much further, however, for with two

lines we only landed one fish of about a quarter of a pound in weight, which had beautiful rainbow colours, and was probably a species of mullet. We soon ceased to ask the names of any fish we saw, for the only answer was, "Dat a kind o' fish, sar," the negro mind having no affinity for detail. Amongst fish which are caught off the coast are mackerel, mullet, roach, pilchard, bonito, and thoin.

Before leaving the Hotel des Bains we bade an affectionate farewell to Euphémie, who pressed us to buy a basket of imitation West Indian fruit, saying, "You give dem your sweetheart." When we told her we did not happen to have any, she made gestures which seemed to imply contempt and incredulity. And so we took leave of Martinique, not altogether with regret, for some of its manners and customs seemed to us peculiar. We were glad, nevertheless, that we had seen it.

It was ten o'clock on the 8th of May when we found ourselves once more at sea, this time on board the *Fontabelle*, one of the Quebec line steamers. She is only constructed to carry from twenty to thirty passengers, and has a smaller saloon deck than the *Royal Mail*, but we found her very comfortable; and such an excellent lunch was provided,

that we would willingly have cancelled the déjeuner we had eaten at the Hotel des Bains!

A fresh north-easterly wind was blowing, and the air was delicious, as we rode over the waves, rising high out of the water one moment, and the next dipping our bows into the foam. The mountains and forests of Martinique were moving past us, every moment producing a picture more lovely than the last. Beautiful bays and wooded cliffs, coffee and cocoa plantations, palms fringing the shore, and the white surf breaking on the rocks—all these passed before us in a moving panorama, and we felt a longing to explore every nook and corner of the coast. From time to time we saw fish jumping, which were as large as fair-sized salmon, while flocks of flying-fish scudded over the waves, and now and again a whale-boat passed us on the way to St Pierre. As we rounded the last spur of land, I could see the blue outline of the Dominican mountains, rising precipitously from the sea. Nearer and nearer we approached, until there spread out before us a more magnificent prospect than any I had yet seen—even after three months' cruising in the midst of these beautiful islands. No words can express the loveliness of Dominica as seen

from the sea. Not an acre of level ground was visible, and every inch was covered with forest. All the luxuriance of Trinidad was here combined with a wild and solemn grandeur which filled one with awe. The mountains rose so abruptly from the sea that it seemed impossible there could be any human habitation. We counted no less than twenty-four separate peaks as we skirted the coast towards Roseau. The highest, Mount Diablotin, away to the north, attains an altitude of 4750 feet. The spurs of the mountains ended in bold headlands which were covered with a wealth of vegetation, causing them to have a rich velvety appearance, the brilliant sunshine intensifying the colours of the hundred different kinds of trees. Notwithstanding the precipitous nature of the coast, we could see here and there little wooden huts nestling amongst the palm trees along the water's edge, the fishermen's cottages of Dominica.

We were now approaching Roseau, the capital of the island, a picturesque little town, not unlike a European fishing village. It is built in a long line close to the mouth of the Roseau River, where a little level ground is available. The spires of the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches rise

gracefully from amongst the houses, with a background of forest beyond, and mountains rising layer on layer into the interior of the island. The home Government had lately voted a sum of £15,000 to be employed in works for the improvement of Dominica, and a new pier was already in progress. Undoubtedly the town gives one an impression of having fallen into decay. The remains of an old stone pier, destroyed in one of the hurricanes, are still standing like an isolated rock about one hundred yards from the shore. The depth of the sea is so great round the shores of Dominica that the big liners are able to anchor almost within a stone's throw of the beach; consequently, the landing does not take so long here as in other islands. We made our way at once to Miss Callender's boarding-house, just outside the town. Glowing accounts of the comforts to be found there had reached us, and these were not one whit exaggerated. The house stands on the top of some low cliffs, and is built of wood, with verandahs on both sides. It has bright airy rooms, and a charming little yard at the back with picturesque stables and shady trees and creepers. Everything is clean

and bright; meals are nicely served by a neat little coloured girl from one of the neighbouring islands, the best servant I had seen at any hotel in the West Indies; and, in fact, one felt very much reminded of an ideal Devonshire farm-house, with West Indian fruits and dishes to take the place of the Devonshire milk and cream. Add to this the profusion of palms and bananas and spreading mango trees, with leaves of all shades of colour, from a fresh green to a lovely deep bronze, and bread-fruit trees with their giant leaves and fruit like large green oranges; and to all these again the mountains and the tropical sea, and you will gain some faint notion of the enchanting beauty of the spot.

Miss Callender was most anxious to help us in every way to make the most of our stay in the island, for we had only six days, and there was much to see. The first thing to do was to procure two ponies to our liking. One Miss Callender was able to supply, and the other she obtained for us in the town. This latter, which I rode, was a true "Creole" pony, with the peculiar ambling trot for which they are distinguished. His chief defect was a somewhat embarrassing way which he had

of varying his paces. After a day's study of his methods, however, I found that we worked better together. V.'s steed was a good trotter, and both could enjoy a gallop, so we were very well satisfied, especially after our stay in Martinique. Our first ride was along the coast road through Roseau and across the Roseau River, a mountain torrent coming down over great boulders to the sea. This road is really the only one in the island which has any claim to the title. Everywhere else we found nothing but bridle paths, and even here it soon degenerated into a rough track. Riding in the cool of the evening, with the sea on one side, and gigantic cliffs covered with forest on the other, one seemed never to tire of drinking in the beauty of it all. Troops of negresses, carrying wooden trays on their heads, on which every kind of commodity was to be seen, passed us from time to time, usually saluting us respectfully, but looking as if they would much like to know our business. Lizards innumerable, some of considerable size, scuttled away amongst the ferns and under-growth at our approach. Sometimes we would come to a fishing village, when all the dogs and negro children would come out in swarms, and there was a regular

pandemonium of barking and shouting. On these occasions we would whip up our ponies and charge through the mob, the respectable middle-class negro shaking his fist after us and shouting, "We summons you," as we rapidly disappeared. In Dominica one passes through acres and acres of lime plantations, and we used to gather the limes from our saddles, and use them as missiles to keep the dogs at bay.

On the morning of 10th May we set out by boat to reach the sulphur springs at Souffrière, about three miles by water from Roseau. Our boat was a large and substantial one, with a wooden awning in the stern, which sheltered us effectually from the scorching sun, and our three boatmen were a powerful combination. Two were mulattos, one of whom, the "Mercury" of the trio, had been a steward on board one of the ocean steamers. He had a silvery tongue and a very insinuating manner, and it was comical to see how his colleagues invariably left it to him to do all the diplomatic part of the business. The three would consult together with solemn faces, and then "Mark," as the others called him, would come forward and announce their decision. He was, no doubt, a valuable addition to the firm,

for he spoke like a European, was well informed, and extremely courteous in his manner. The second was a capable looking fellow, with some grit in him, but he was a degree or two nearer to the pure negro. It was, however, "Mr Sullivan" who interested us most of all. In colour he was black as ink, but his features were unmistakably those of the American Indian. His whole manner was unlike that of the negro. He was quiet and dignified, but with a distinct sense of humour. What made the greatest impression on us, however, was his chest, which was the squarest and broadest we had ever seen. For hours he would pull against his two colleagues without a sign of fatigue. We used to recline at full length in the stern of the boat, in true Oriental fashion, as we moved lazily along the tropical shore, and amuse ourselves by laughing at the others because they could not pull one man round. In fact, V., who was steering in a lazy sort of fashion, was nearly always obliged to give them a little assistance. They would take the chaff very good naturedly, shaking their heads and saying: "He no like ordinary man," and as for "Hercules," as we called him, he would smile a grim smile, which betokened the greatest satisfaction.

Souffrière is beautifully situated in a little sheltered cove. On one side of the village a magnificent conical mountain, called by the natives "Indian mountain," rises precipitously from the water's edge, resembling a gigantic obelisk with precipices falling sheer down on every side, so that it seemed almost miraculous that trees should take root upon them; yet every inch was covered with the most luxuriant vegetation. The depth of the sea at the foot of this mountain is so great that it has never yet been fathomed. Sharks are plentiful, and also the much-dreaded barracouta. Our boatman related to us how a white gentleman lately swam across with his dog to get to a point lower down the coast, and when he looked round the poor dog had been bitten in two by one of these horrible creatures. We were quite willing to take their advice, and not bathe at that spot, nor did I feel entirely at my ease a few hundred yards away, though they assured us there was no longer any danger. I never could see why sharks and barracoutas should so rigidly confine themselves to one spot. However, the whole five of us plunged in, and I felt there was safety in numbers. One can jump into the water here without the least sense of chill,

and stay there for hours, the temperature being 80° Fahr.

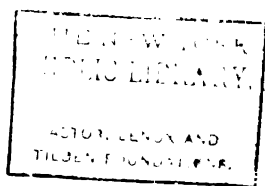
The sulphur springs are situated four or five hundred feet above the sea, on the slope of the mountain. Having secured a guide, the ugliest negro I saw in the West Indies, we made our way through limes, tamarinds, guava bushes, and dense grasses to the spot. The force of the steam and the noise are not so great as in St Lucia, but the cake of sulphur over which we had to walk was intensely hot, and I could scarcely hold a piece of it which one of our boatmen knocked out of the ground for me. A sulphur stream finds its way down into the valley below, and at one point is a pool which we were told we ought to bathe in, for it has great medicinal properties. However, as we were in very fair health, and it did not look particularly inviting, we declined, somewhat to the disgust of our guides. On the way back to our boat, we despatched a little black boy, who had followed to stare at us, to gather some green coker-nuts, and drank long draughts of the coker-nut water, which was most refreshing after our long climb.

The next day, Monday, we were to start on our great journey to the boiling lake. To reach it, it was



HOT SPRINGS, DOMINICA.

Page 169.



necessary to sleep one night in a negro hut in the interior in order to make an early start. The occupant, Mr Fon-Fon, is the only man in the island who can find the way to the lake. We had to lay in a store of provisions to last us until the next evening, and to find two bearers to carry these and my cameras. Miss Callender proved herself to be a thorough adept in the ordnance department, and her brother-in-law, Mr C——, who is Government surveyor in the island, kindly turned us out two black boys of about eighteen or nineteen as bearers.

At about ten o'clock on 11th May the cavalcade started on its journey. After passing through the streets of Roseau, where we were the objects of much curiosity and attention at the hands of the black population, we crossed the river again, and began to ascend the valley, which forms one of the grandest pieces of scenery in the West Indies. It is of great width, though the river which roars amidst great boulders in its narrow channel below seems to have shrunk greatly from what it must once have been. On either side the banks rise in great cliffs and terraces, now covered with masses of vegetation, now in ledges and steep precipices of bare volcanic rock, like giant

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battlements running the whole length of the valley. The ground seems to rise from the ravine in a gigantic staircase of magnificent cliffs, till the summit is reached far away in the peaks of the forest-clad mountains. We followed the course of the river for about two miles, and then struck off to our left into a winding path which took us gradually higher and higher. Now we were riding through lime groves and cacao plantations, now again amidst bread-fruit trees, mangoes, cedars, and big locust trees, whilst all around us were bananas with long tapering fronds, and tall palms and feathery bamboos with foliage like delicate maidenhair. Again and again I was amazed at the wonderful variety of form in these tropical forests. In our English woods the trees mostly belong to the same family, but here were cedars, mangoes, and such-like growing side by side with bamboos and bananas, which are more like gigantic grasses and ferns, reaching a height of from thirty to forty feet. As we rose higher and higher, the foliage became more luxuriant and beautiful because undisturbed by man. Soon we were in the region of tree-ferns, which grew more and more numerous as we mounted upward and upward. All along the banks at the side of the path were orchids, wild begonias, and

wonderful creepers and ferns, covering everything in the most lavish profusion.

As we were riding along in a kind of reverie, our minds enraptured with all this beauty, we were suddenly awakened by a scramble and a crash behind us, and looking round saw our baskets of provisions, which were to last us for two days, a wreck upon the ground, while the boy stood by with a look of sullen stupidity on his face. He had let everything tumble off the top of his head, which is usually the safest possible place with an African. This boy, however, had either been drinking too much rum or was half-witted. In the end we inclined to the latter view. As for the provisions, they were all in the most dire confusion. Bottles of Kola champagne had completely flooded the sandwiches and the cold chicken, whilst new-laid eggs were reduced to a shapeless and unsightly-looking pulp. We plunged into the depths of our vocabulary, using words well fitted for the occasion, and at last proceeded on our way with nerves very much ruffled. As the path became more level, skirting the side of the mountain, we left our bearers far behind, and the mountain air and lovely scenery soon made us forget so great a calamity as the loss of part

of our stores. We missed the path, however, to the village of Lodeau, and should have gone far astray had we not fallen in with an exceedingly quaint little negro gentleman on a small donkey, with his feet dragging on the ground. He appeared to be a small market gardener, and had been taking some of his produce into town. He was certainly a very grotesque object, especially when he headed the procession in order to conduct us to Fon-Fon's hut, chattering all the time about the island as if it were all his private property, and informing us at least a dozen times that Mr Fon-Fon was a personal friend of his, and would have great pleasure in entertaining us. At last we came out on a piece of open common, covered with wild raspberry bushes, and with forests stretching away on all sides, sloping gradually down towards the ocean to the southward, and upward till they ended in the peaks of the mountains to the north. In the centre stood Fon-Fon's hut, a small wooden structure, which had the appearance of a primitive stable, while other wooden huts and outbuildings were scattered about. The arrival of the cavalcade caused great excitement, all the little black Fon-Fons coming out in swarms to stare at us. We were about to exchange greetings with our host, when a donkey,

presumably his, advanced to meet our guide, who was heading the procession with great dignity, and the two donkeys stood facing each other for some minutes, braying in such an appalling manner that they must almost have been heard in Martinique. In vain did the little gentleman belabour his steed with a stick over the head and ears, and it was only when the other donkey had been driven away by the Fon-Fon family, not without considerable difficulty, that we were able to hear ourselves speak. We then explained our presence to Mr Fon-Fon, which was not an easy matter, since he knew very few words of English, and his French patois was quite unintelligible to us. The difficulty was all the greater because he never admitted that he did not understand. The only way to discover whether he did so or not was by gauging the degree of intelligence which was depicted on his face. We left our ponies to graze, and sat down to rest and to enjoy the glorious view until our bearers should arrive, which was not till nearly three o'clock. By this time we were beginning to feel the pangs of hunger considerably, and we eagerly devoured a few sandwiches extricated from the wreck, sitting at a little wooden table inside the hut with all the children squatting on the step and

watching us with profound interest. They were most attentive, and gathered us a large plateful of wild raspberries, which were very refreshing. This fruit is not like the ordinary raspberry, but has a delicious fresh flavour, and is of a brighter colour. We had not long finished our repast when Mr C—— rode up on his way to the other side of the island to inspect the road. We saddled our ponies and rode on with him as far as one of the fresh-water lakes, high up on the mountains, for which Dominica is celebrated. The higher we went the denser the forest became—begonias, orchids, and ferns of every description growing in profusion along the path, whilst humming birds and lovely coloured butterflies flitted ever and anon amongst them. The lake itself is exceedingly beautiful, lying calm and peaceful in the heart of the mountains, with all the mystery of its sombre curtain of forests, untrodden by human foot, untouched by human hand.

Here Fon-Fon and two small black boys who had followed on foot came up with us, and we had a refreshing drink from a spring, using large leaves, which they dexterously made into cups. We rode on to a place called Rosalie—a pass from which the descent to the opposite coast begins, and there, in a

flash, the whole island seemed to burst into view. Magnificent peaks surrounded us in clusters, each leaf in the masses of trees which covered them from base to summit seeming to stand out clearly in the brilliant sunlight. Far away between the peaks were glimpses of the blue sea, with dim outlines of other islands faintly seen on the horizon. So overwhelming was the beauty of this panorama, that we tore ourselves away with great difficulty to retrace our steps to Lodeau. The next day, however, was to be a very heavy one, and the night was not likely to refresh us much; so we wished Mr C—— farewell and a prosperous journey to his destination, which he showed us far below in the valley, and turned to ride back again. On the way we picked some of those beautiful silver ferns which, when pressed on the back of the hand, leave a perfect impress of silver, also one or two gold ones, which even here are uncommon. I longed to take them back to England, but they require a higher temperature than I could give them.

On getting back to the hut, we set to work to prepare our meal. The little Fon-Fons lit a fire of sticks and boiled the kettle; then they gathered us some more red berries, and we ate a hearty tea. Soon

afterwards the darkness came on rapidly, as it does in the tropics, and I sat out in the open, gazing at the brilliant stars, and listening to the chorus of frogs, chack-chacks, and crickets in the surrounding forests. V. was busy catching fire-flies to take back to Barbados (where they are now extinct), assisted by the two black boys who had come up with us from Roseau, and three or four of the children.

The Southern Cross glittered like so many jewels set in the clear sky. Every sound and every object were strange and novel, and exercised a peculiar fascination over me. At about half-past nine we slung up our two hammocks—people go to bed with the sun and rise with the sun in Dominica—while the whole Fon-Fon family went to roost in the next room. We left the outer door open to ensure our having plenty of air, and lay down to rest but alas! not to sleep. Rats scampered about the floor, sheep put their heads in and bleated in the middle of the night, the children cried, and worse than all, we were so mercilessly attacked by sand-flies that we began to fear our reason was giving way. The wind began to feel bitterly cold too, and I had to get up and shut the door before morning. It had not been reassuring when Fon-Fon warned us against leaving

the bread on the table, saying, "You leave it dere, de rats take it," but we did not anticipate quite such a night as this!

Morning dawned at last, and we got up feeling somewhat "cheap," but relieved that the night was over, and determined to get to the Boiling Lake somehow, or die in the attempt. At about eight o'clock we set out in single file, Fon-Fon leading the way with a cutlass, then V. and myself, and lastly two small black boys carrying cameras and provisions. Almost immediately we plunged into the forest, and for about an hour we walked on mechanically, seeing nothing but the stems of trees everywhere, like a vast colonnade, the upper branches shutting out the sun, whilst we were obliged to keep our eyes on the ground the greater part of the time to avoid stumbling over roots or sinking in the marshy ground. On and on we went, like spectres moving silently through the woods, except that every now and then one of us would catch his foot in a root, and measure his length upon the ground. Not so our guide, for he never looked like making a false step, so smoothly and unconcernedly did he saunter along. He appeared to be moving at the rate of about two miles an hour, but in reality we were obliged to quicken our pace to keep up with him. Several hundred times

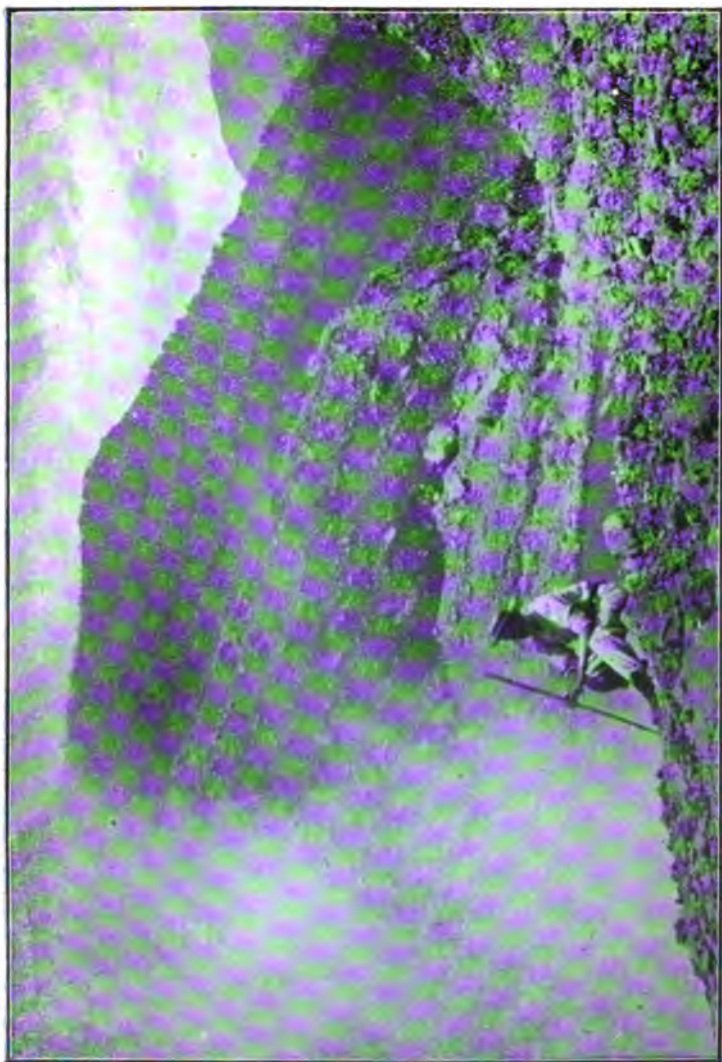
he had been over the same track, and nobody else could find it without him. Every now and then he would lop off branches which had grown across the path since his last survey.

About forty-five minutes' walking brought us to the Roseau River, and very welcome was the sound of the running water which reached us through the forest some minutes before we came suddenly upon it. The heat was considerable, although we were sheltered from the sun, and we drank eagerly from the fresh, clear water. As it was the dry season the river was low, and we were able to cross it by stepping or jumping from one boulder to another. The ferns and creepers which covered the banks were indescribably beautiful, nothing being visible to the eye but a wild tangle of every species of undergrowth, checked only by the river itself. After this brief glimpse of the outer world we buried ourselves again in the forest. Walking grew more and more difficult, for the ground became more uneven as we got farther from Lodeau, and we appeared to be climbing up and down the sides of the mountains.

After about an hour's further progress we heard again the roar of a river ahead of us, and a few minutes later came upon another mountain torrent, which Fon-Fon told us was called "*Rivière déjeuner*,"

or Breakfast River, and which was, he considered, the halfway house of our journey. We only stayed for another drink, fearing that if we rested long we should get stiff and tire more easily. The hardest part was still before us. Having crossed the river, we began to ascend a steep bank through a tangle of ferns and grasses and shrubs, holding on to the stems and swinging ourselves upwards by them. In many places the ground under our feet was composed of wet clay, and we should have rolled to the bottom if there had been any room for us to roll. Another hour's scrambling and we came out suddenly on the top of a lofty ridge, and a wonderful scene burst upon our view. We had reached what is really the centre of the volcanic system of the Windward Islands. All the luxuriant tropical vegetation came to an abrupt end, and nothing but steep precipices of bare volcanic rock was to be seen. Away to our left we suddenly became aware of a great volume of steam rising from a deep hollow in the mountains. Nothing more like the entrance to the infernal regions could well be imagined. The air was full of sulphur, which strengthened the illusion, and smaller jets of steam were to be seen issuing from the ground here and there, where hot springs were bubbling up. We clambered down the side of the mountain where

it was almost perpendicular and very difficult to get any foothold, until reaching the bottom, we found ourselves in the midst of a perfect field of sulphur springs, clouds of steam shooting up on every side of us. We made our way over cakes of sulphur, with the vertical sun beating down upon our heads, following the course of a stream which started from the springs, and climbing backwards and forwards from one bank to the other, while we narrowly escaped being precipitated into scalding pools. Great boulders of granite lay about like pebbles, and streams of water trickled down the side of the mountain, some milky white, some red with a strong solution of iron, others, again, black as ink and horrible to look upon. Then we had to climb again over more ridges, sometimes up to our necks in tall grasses, of a species not unlike bamboo grass, but called (as Fon-Fon told us) "calamed grass." We now made our way up the bed of a stream which issued from the Boiling Lake itself, and which came tearing down in a series of cataracts of scalding water into the valley below. Having at last reached the top, we found ourselves on the edge of the basin or crater, in the hollow of which is the lake. There it was below us, boiling and seething like a huge cauldron, so utterly unlike anything I had ever seen



THE ROLLING LAKE, DOMINICA.

in nature, that I stood gazing at it in mingled horror and amazement. Awful as it was, its very ghastliness fascinated one. In the centre was an oblong mass of rock, like a great cake of lava, round which the water tumbled over and over incessantly, throwing up great clouds of scalding steam, which blew this way and that way with each puff of wind that caught it. Not a sign of vegetation was to be seen on the walls of the crater. On the opposite side was a gap like a mountain cutting, through which we could see the peaks beyond once more laden with tropical growth, and rising one beyond another into the far distance. The contrast between the utter desolation of the crater and the luxuriant covering of these mountains beyond it was remarkable in the extreme. We made our way down to the edge of the water, where I attempted a snapshot, but was half blinded by clouds of sulphurous steam, whilst the metal fittings of the camera were turned green by the sulphur. The intense heat of the water, even round the edge where it is in a quiescent state, may be imagined by the fact that V. scalded his fingers badly in picking out a stone. This stone I afterwards submitted to the Jermyn Street Museum to be analysed, as we thought it was possibly a piece of solidified lava. The probability is, however, that it formed

part of a dyke in the old volcanic cone, and was solidified before reaching the surface. It was found to contain, amongst other constituents, crystals of "hypersthene," which are not found in Europe except in the Balearic Isles. On one side of the crater, curiously enough, we found a little cool spring bubbling out of the rock, and close to this we sat down to eat our tinned beef, but the sun beat down on our heads with such force that appetites were at a discount.

It had taken us about three hours and three quarters to reach the lake from Lodeau, and we started on the return journey at one o'clock. It was quite a relief to bury ourselves again in the forest after another hour's climbing over the bare rocks. Progress seemed comparatively easy and comfortable after what we had now experienced. During the last hour, however, we realised that our strength was beginning to give way by the number of false steps we both made. Every moment we seemed to trip over a root or stump, whilst even Fon-Fon stumbled several times, and finally he turned round and admitted to me that he was tired, which greatly encouraged me to struggle on. We reached the hut at five o'clock in the evening, got our ponies saddled as quickly as possible, and rode on down to Roseau.

Darkness overtook us some time before we arrived, and on our way we saw for the first and last time one of those luminous beetles which carry a fixed light, larger and more brilliant than that of the ordinary fire-fly. They are plentiful also in Trinidad and St Vincent at this season of the year. The light which they carry resembles two brilliant eyes on the wing-cases.

The comforts of Miss Callender's little house seemed all the greater after the many *discomforts* of the last forty-eight hours! The next day was our last in the island, and we spent it quietly, riding up the opposite side of the Roseau valley in the cool of the evening. At the head of the valley is a fine waterfall, of which a distant view is obtained on the road to Lodeau. This we had some idea of exploring, but after we had inquired many times of the natives who passed us on the road, whether we were on the right track, and invariably received a confident "Yessar" in reply, we found ourselves miles out of it. The surrounding country is all so beautiful, however, that it matters little where one goes. We learnt one thing, and that was the patois for "What is the time?" for my watch having stopped, we asked a negro by the road-side to enlighten us. English and French

having been tried alternately, without any sign of intelligence, I at last pulled out my watch and tapped the glass, whereupon he was convulsed with laughter. "Ah, kel-ai-oor!" he exclaimed, evidently quite overcome with our ignorance.

This is a good specimen of the mangled French which is spoken by the black population in those islands which were formerly French possessions. It is a sign of the somewhat languid interest hitherto taken in them by our own Government, that this should still be the language of the country. There is a good Grammar School at Roseau with English teachers, but the island is still very French. Two little boys came to the verandah one morning begging, and chattered to us in patois, which we could not understand. Presently an old negro came along and began to rate them soundly in the same peculiar dialect. We found afterwards that the gist of his sermon was: "You go to school regularly, den you able to talk to de gentlemen."

The island evidently wants some more English settlers to come and infuse fresh life and vigour into it. I am positive that there cannot be a more lovely or fertile spot in the whole world. I have heard it said that in Dominica you can almost see the bushes grow. The rainfall is considerable, and probably

such a statement is not far beyond the truth. And yet, in spite of all this, not more than one-twentieth part of Dominica is at present under cultivation. The rest is all uncleared forest to the extent of 183,000 acres. The temperature seldom rises above 86° in the hot months, and though the rainfall averages from 100 to 150 inches in the year, the water sinks so rapidly into the porous soil that the atmosphere is not damp and oppressive as it is in Trinidad. There is no reason why men with a little capital (say £2000 or £3000) should not become successful planters in Dominica, with a little preliminary training. The soil and climate are perfectly adapted for the cultivation of limes, sugar, cocoa, coffee, and various spices, as well as bananas, pine apples, oranges, and mangoes. Many of these grow luxuriantly at the present day, but scarcely any effort has been made to develop them. There is now a Botanical station at Roseau, at which orange, cocoa, lime, and other plants can be readily purchased. The Government are making every effort to assist intending settlers, by spreading information, and by helping them to acquire lands on favourable terms. Labour is quite easy to obtain. The want of good roads has had much to do with the backwardness of Dominica in the

past, but this state of things is already passing away, and I hope and believe the time may be not far distant when this lovely island will be duly appreciated, and its immense productive value recognised by the public.

Next day, with the most genuine regret, we took leave of Miss Callender and of Dominica. We had only made one enemy, and that was the boy who upset our lunch, and who, when we dismissed him, said he would "know what to do." However, the last time we saw him, he was distinctly grinning, so we hoped he had decided to forgive and forget, as we had. Our three swarthy boatmen rowed us out to the *Eden*, and I carried away with me two live "agoutis," which a black woman had brought to the door of our boarding-house, and one of which has now survived three English winters, and is still in the best of health.

We took a parting snap-shot of our boat and its crew from the gangway while the ship was rolling heavily, and then waving affectionate farewells were soon under weigh, and steaming southwards once more on the return voyage to Barbados.

CHAPTER VII.

HAYTI.

THE island of Hayti is one of the largest of the group, lying about one thousand miles west of Barbados, and about one hundred east of Jamaica. The ocean steamer calls regularly at the town of Jacmel *en route* to Kingston, Jamaica, and stops just long enough to land mails and passengers. It would be no exaggeration to say that no other island in the world has had a more eventful history than Hayti! Discovered by Columbus four hundred years ago, and colonised by the French and Spaniards, it has now become a Black Republic, with a president and senate, and appears to be fast relapsing into a state of barbarism.

Leaving Barbados on Monday afternoon, we were timed to arrive at Jacmel at daybreak on Thursday morning, the voyage occupying more than half the time taken in getting from Liverpool to New York. The sea was calm, with a light breeze blowing,

and the ship went smoothly along, rolling lazily from side to side as if she were feeling happy and comfortable. I had with me a friend from Barbados, whom I will refer to as R. B. There were only forty first-class passengers on board, the majority having gone ashore at Barbados, so we had large airy cabins, and big square port-holes which let in a refreshing breeze. Amongst the first-class passengers was a Haytian ex-minister, who created considerable interest. He was a short dapper little man, with the usual vanity of the negro, which made itself ridiculously noticeable in his walk. He was neatly dressed in a black coat and striped trousers, and wore a yachting cap and pince-nez. In colour he was as black as any native I had seen, but the usual coarseness of feature was modified. The lips were full, but not quite so thick as is usually the case with the full-blooded negro; neither were the nostrils so hideous, and there was a certain courtesy in his outward manner, which was however to a great extent spoilt by his conceit. The Haytians speak of all Europeans amongst themselves as "white trash," and this man's bearing was most instructive as to their attitude towards us.

Their hatred is, perhaps, not without its reasons, which are deeply rooted in history; but though

they have been badly treated, the horrible cruelties practised by these people towards one another since their independence make it impossible for one to feel any strong sympathy. When originally discovered by Christopher Columbus, Hayti was inhabited by the Arawak Indians, a gentle and courteous race, who received the explorers with every sign of goodwill. Quite distinct from the Caribs of St Vincent and Grenada, these Arawaks lived contentedly and at peace with one another. Very primitive in their habits, they subsisted chiefly upon fruits and herbs, and on the fish which they caught along the coasts. They are said to have been (unlike the Indians of the Spanish main) a good-looking race. The men wore no clothing at all, and the women only a short petticoat.

Very soon the greed and cruelty of the Spaniards began to show itself. They wanted gold, and they did not care how they got it. Columbus went back to Spain and gave glowing accounts of his newly discovered land, to which he gave the name of Hispaniola. Other adventurers followed. They began to rob the helpless natives without the smallest scruple. Then, finding that the tropical sun would not allow Europeans to do any hard manual labour, they raided villages right and left, seizing the un-

fortunate inhabitants, and making them work as slaves in the pursuit of gold. But it could not last long ; a life to which they were so unfitted very soon had its effect. One by one they pined away and died, and whereas there was once a population which the very lowest calculation places at eight hundred thousand, not one soul is left to represent them !

The fame of Hispaniola was spreading throughout Europe, and during the seventeenth century ships began to arrive bringing parties of French adventurers or buccaneers, who settled on the western side of the island. These increased to such an extent that in 1697 the whole of the western portion was recognised as a French possession.

As the poor Arawaks died out gradually, a great question arose as to how a supply of labour was to be obtained for the plantations which were springing into existence. Then it was that the trade in negroes from the West Coast of Africa began. The demand was great and increasing, and both planters and slave-dealers were eager to increase the supply, for both saw prospects of immense fortunes before them. The prosperity of the planters increased by leaps and bounds. Coffee, cocoa, sugar, and indigo were vigorously cultivated. The negroes, unlike the natives, had been always accustomed to the idea if not to the

reality of slavery, since from time immemorial they had been preyed upon by more powerful races in Africa. The French and Spanish planters vied with each other in cruelty. If there was any difference, perhaps the Frenchman was the worst, since he was more active and expected more. So things went on until the outbreak of the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century. Even in this far-away island the shock of it was felt. The cry of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" reached the ears of the negro slaves. The spirit of the revolution seized them. Unable to follow all the superstitions of Rousseau, they quickly grasped the meaning of the words for them. The flames spread rapidly, and the whole of the black population were ready to revolt. The planters were in a state of the greatest alarm, not knowing what would be the next move of the mother country. In May 1791 the Constitutional Assembly in Paris passed their famous decree, conferring on all blacks born of free parents equal political rights with Europeans. The planters were furious, declaring that it would mean the loss of the colony to France. To this the Revolutionists replied:—"Perish the colonies rather than a principle." The whole country was now in a state of uproar. The mulattos, following their traditional policy, were

violently opposed to the freedom of the blacks, and formed a party of their own. The blacks were guilty of such horrible cruelties as to alienate all sympathy, and of all the factions there was not one for which it is possible to feel anything but disgust. Commissions were sent out to endeavour to pacify the people, but they themselves were of the worst type which the Revolution brought to the surface.

In the whole of this deplorable picture there is only one figure which stands out nobly against a background of intrigue, selfishness, and barbarism. Toussaint L'Ouverture, the saviour of his people, will always be remembered as one of the grandest and most pure-minded champions of the cause of freedom that the world has ever seen. This remarkable man was born a slave on one of the plantations, and was almost, if not quite, a pure negro, his grandfather having been an African prince. In his portraits, however, the features are almost too refined for a full-blooded negro. His strong personality brought him rapidly to the front. He organised an army, and in the midst of all the desultory fighting, when whites, blacks, and mulattos were turned one against another, he slowly but surely made himself master of the island. He proclaimed a constitution, with a President and Assembly, declaring himself President

for life, and began to administer the country in a sound and business-like manner, and in perfect good faith. Unlike all the other "generals," who were numerous, he was entirely free from prejudice with regard to colour, and treated all alike with perfect justice. Captain Rainsford, an English artillery officer, who knew him personally, speaks of him with the greatest enthusiasm. "His principles," he says, "when becoming an actor in the revolution of his country, were as pure and legitimate as those which actuated the greatest founders of liberty in any age or clime." Speaking of his personal appearance, he says, "Toussaint was of a manly form, above the middle stature, with a countenance bold and striking, yet full of the most prepossessing suavity." He was also a man of culture, and possessed a library which contained many classical works. In his home he was a most affectionate husband and father. He was especially fond of animals, and would punish any cruelty which came under his notice with the utmost severity.

Seeing Toussaint to be a dangerous rival, the French general Leclerc, by a base act of treachery, lured him to a conference, and had him arrested and immediately shipped off to France with his wife and children, who were never once allowed to see him during the voyage. On the arrival of the ship at

Brest he was hurried off to a dungeon in Normandy, after parting from his wife and children for the last time before all the sailors on deck. It is said that those who witnessed that parting never forgot it all their lives. In the *Times* of 2nd May 1803 appeared the following paragraph :—"Toussaint L'Ouverture is dead. He died, according to letters from Besançon, in prison a few days ago. The fate of this man has been singularly unfortunate, and his treatment most cruel. . . . He died, we believe, without a friend to close his eyes." Thus ended the career of a man who, in the words of Captain Rainsford, "was greater in his fall than his enemies in their assumed power." His name has been immortalised by Wordsworth :—

" Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee ; thou hast great allies,
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind."

The troubles of the French were not over when Toussaint was gone. When taken on board the vessel, he had declared that his captors were only removing the branch of the tree—the roots they would never reach. Very soon afterwards a fearful epidemic of yellow fever nearly exterminated the French troops, and the negroes, taking advantage of it, declared the independence of Hayti in 1805.

From that time no serious attempt has been made to recover it. Its history has been one long record of revolutions, massacres, and assassinations. Scarcely a single President has died a natural death, with the exception of a few who have escaped on British men-of-war. In the light of subsequent events, it is somewhat mournful to read the words of Captain Rainsford in 1805. Speaking of Toussaint's administration, he says that if it had not been for him "the country now blooming with culture and advancing in true civilisation might have been a ruined state, sacrificed to the conflicts of disappointed ambition, revenge, and the whole train of evils which a multiplicity of factions could create." Unhappily, this is but a fairly accurate description of what Hayti has actually been during the whole of the nineteenth century.

In addition to the ex-minister whom I have described, we had on board amongst the second-class passengers seven or eight political refugees, whose object was to land at Jacmel. They were most of them black or nearly so, and all were men of fine physique. In most cases the expression of the face was brutal, and the white of the eyes had a very ugly look. Some wore embroidered caps and were dressed in the most approved European fashion, whilst others were attired in large sun hats and shabby suits of canvas.

On the Wednesday evening some little excitement was caused by the appearance of a notice in French posted up in the companion-way, to the effect that, owing to a decree of the Haytian Senate, no persons were to be permitted to land. I gathered from a conversation with the captain that some at least of these men had been backwards and forwards more than once between Barbados and Jamaica, endeavouring to effect a landing at Jacmel. Revolutions were still in full swing, and only a few weeks before our arrival some brigand had marched from Jacmel, sacked the town, and had been created a "general" in consequence. We all looked forward with a considerable amount of curiosity to the scene at daybreak next morning.

At 5.50 A.M. I was awakened by R. B. bursting into my cabin and announcing that we were already close to Jacmel. Springing up and looking out of the port-hole, I saw a long line of richly wooded cliffs only about half a mile away. We were now lying in a large bay, shaped like a horse-shoe, with two fine headlands on either side covered with tropical vegetation. In the centre of the bay, on a low ridge, lay the town of Jacmel, about three quarters of a mile away. We could make out a cluster of houses packed closely together, and rising up from the sea, and in the centre the twin towers or campaniles of

the Roman Catholic cathedral. The grouping is picturesque, and at this distance does not convey a bad impression. From all accounts, however, we were not an inch too far away, for distance helps greatly to the appreciation of Jacmel. Away to the east, heavy storm-clouds were rolling down over a magnificent range of mountains within the territory of San Domingo. The highest peaks of these mountains reach an altitude of 10,000 feet. The atmospheric effects were magnificent. Behind Jacmel, again, we could see ridge after ridge ending in lofty ranges, which were half hidden in mist and cloud. Some half-dozen boats were approaching us slowly from the shore, most of them being heavy lightermen with two negroes punting. The Haytian passengers were crowded together on the upper deck, gazing wistfully at the shore, or impatiently watching the progress of the boats as they came slowly towards us. In another quarter of an hour we were taking passengers on board, amongst them two or three Haytian ladies in gorgeous dresses, and of various shades of colour from olive to jet black. One of these, who was evidently of the *elite*, brought with her a black Pomeranian dog, a canary, and a number of mysterious packages. The group of refugees on board were bowing, raising

their hats, and waving handkerchiefs in acknowledgment of the various salutations from the boats. Some officials now came on board, and held a consultation with them. Meanwhile the luggage was being lowered into the boats amidst a scene of considerable confusion. Some of these Haytian boatmen had a very ugly expression and a peculiarly insolent bearing, which we all noticed. Heavy packing-cases hung in mid-air while these "genial" people were fighting like cats as to which should receive them. They stood on the gunwales of their respective boats, and belaboured one another with oars, while others tried to separate the combatants, and, like all peacemakers, came off very badly. The patience of the ship's officers was evidently tried to the uttermost, and their contempt was scarcely concealed. It was a marvel that half the packing-cases did not go to the bottom of the sea. We had not even dropped anchor, and as soon as ever the mail-boat returned we got under weigh. The only persons who were allowed to land were a young English merchant and his sister, who are settled in the island. As they pulled off, I felt thankful that I was not called upon to change places with them. No white man is allowed to hold an acre of land, and the fact that all Europeans are designated as "white trash" speaks

for itself as regards the attitude of the Haytians towards them.

We hugged the coast nearly all day, and were thus able to form some estimate of the size and character of the island, which is two or three times as large as Jamaica. Soon after leaving Jacmel we passed the sole representative of the Haytian navy, —an old disused mail-boat converted into a cruiser! The coast-line is exceedingly fine all the way until the extreme western limit is reached, when it degenerates into low-lying flats and mangrove swamps. As we watched the succession of fertile valleys which passed before our view, we felt that in this beautiful country truly "only man is vile." Hour after hour slipped by, and we saw no sign of civilisation, or even so much as a fisherman's hut by the water's edge. Probably we might any of us have gone ashore, and lived, like Robinson Crusoe, for weeks or months without meeting another human being, either white or black.

The question as to whether human sacrifices really go on in Hayti was discussed on board, and some passengers who had lived in the island held that there was little room for doubt. The better class of Haytians, instead of taking active measures to suppress "Obeah worship," merely try to hush the

matter up. Consequently, in the outlying villages it seems to be increasing rather than dying out. Sir Spencer St John, in his book on Hayti, describes these heathen orgies. In ordinary cases a goat is the victim, but sometimes a cry is raised for "a goat without horns," and what this means my readers may easily guess.

It was not until nearly six o'clock that we lost sight of land. We were then about one hundred and thirty miles from Jamaica, and were timed to reach Kingston at daybreak next morning. Between 9 and 10 P.M. we were enjoying the soft and balmy air on deck before turning in for the night, when we sighted an immense rock on our starboard bow. This turned out to be a small island, completely isolated, with steep precipices rising sheer out of the sea. It is almost in the direct course of the steamer between Hayti and Jamaica, and a most careful look-out has to be kept until it has been safely left behind. We seemed to pass within a few hundred yards of the cliffs, which looked very weird in the dim light.

Most of us wished to be up in time next morning, to see the sun rise over Port Royal and the Blue Mountains, before entering Kingston Harbour, so we retired early, to lay in a good stock of sleep, trusting to the good ship to convey us safely to land.

30'

77

30'

78

30'

Reference to Parishes

In Cornwall Co.

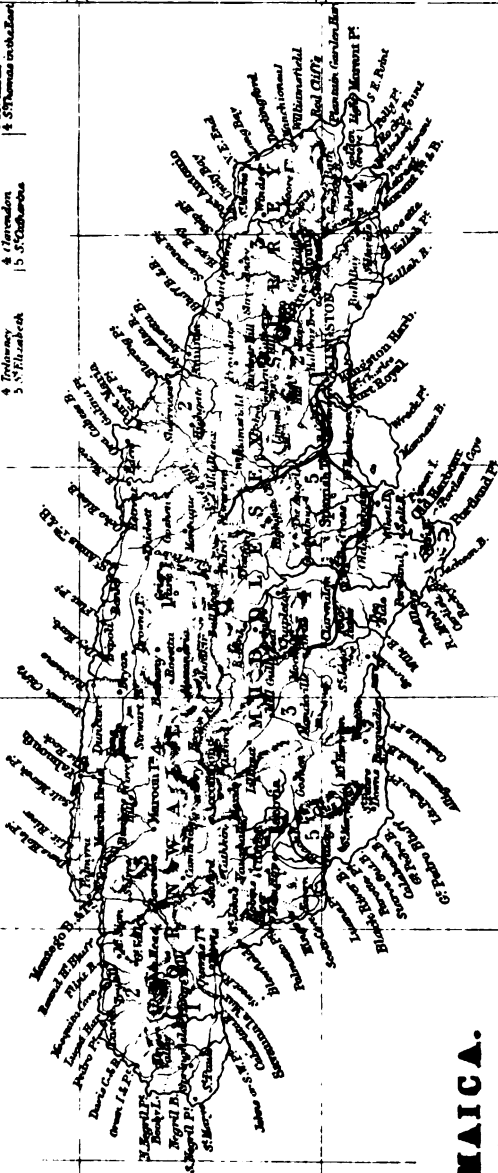
- 1 Westmoreland
- 2 Buxton
- 3 St. James
- 4 Trinity
- 5 Elizabeth

In Middlesex Co.

- 1 St. Ann
- 2 St. Mary
- 3 Manchester
- 4 Harmondsworth
- 5 St. Edmund

In Surrey Co.

- 1 Kingston
- 2 St. Andrew
- 3 Portland
- 4 St. Thomas in the East



JAMAICA.

English Miles

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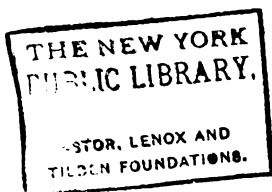
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30'

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George Philip & Son London & Liverpool.



CHAPTER VIII.

JAMAICA.

WAKING, as if by instinct, between three and four o'clock, I crept up on deck. It was dark, but the stars shone brilliantly, and the sea was so smooth that the surface had almost the appearance of molten lead. I think I have never felt elsewhere anything like the soothing influence of these tropical nights at sea. Nature seemed absolutely at peace. Even the engines, in their ceaseless throbbing, seemed half lulled to sleep, for we were only going half-speed, and there was scarcely a ripple as we cut through the smooth water. Far away to star-board a dark mass was visible, and as I gazed a bright red light flashed out suddenly, which proved to be the Palisades Lighthouse at Port Royal.

The harbour of Kingston is enclosed by a long low sandbank called the Palisades, which begins some miles east of Kingston and runs westward, forming a fine natural breakwater. At the western

point lies Port Royal, where some of the troops are stationed, and where many a hero of days gone by lies buried in the historical cemetery.

I slept again till six o'clock, when daylight was breaking. By this time the scene had greatly changed. We were steaming slowly along a low strip of land, the whole length of which was studded with beautiful palms. The light of the rising sun tinged the water all round us with gold. In the background were the Blue Mountains, lovely in the morning light, their summits hidden in banks of magnificent clouds. Kingston lay at the foot of the mountains, hidden by the Palisades.

The steamer has to make a long *détour* rounding the point at Port Royal, and turning almost due eastward again to reach the quay at Kingston. As we entered the harbour, we could scarcely repress a shudder at the thought of all the stories of yellow fever we had heard and read, for there is no place whose name is more associated with that terrible scourge than Port Royal, Jamaica. And yet the truth does not at all bear out the impressions which are so common in England. Jamaica is one of those unfortunate places which have to suffer from a reputation which would have been just two hundred years ago, but is now altogether wrong. In those

days Port Royal was practically the only station in the West Indies where we had anything like an hospital. Hundreds and thousands of sailors were brought from the most deadly spots in Central and South America to die of yellow fever here. What wonder, then, that the disease spread, and that the place soon acquired an evil reputation! There is little or no evidence of yellow fever having originated in the island, but the tropical climate and the absence of all sanitary precautions gave it every opportunity to spread. Cases still occur, but anything like a serious epidemic is almost unknown.

Kingston has not by any means a pleasant appearance from the harbour, for it lies so low as to give the impression of being almost below the level of the water. Very little is to be seen but the buildings adjoining the wharves and the masts of the vessels. The fact that for several hundreds of years the harbour has been the receptacle for all the drainage of the town does not altogether improve matters. The water, directly we got round the point, had turned to a dirty yellow, and while we were being moored alongside the quay we were conscious of a heavy, dank smell rising, which suggested fever of all kinds. On the wharf everything seemed to be enveloped in coal-dust. When

we at last got ashore, we were nearly deafened by the yelling and screeching of a score of shabby-looking negroes, all of whom wanted to carry one's bag at the same time. A more repulsive-looking object than an old negress employed in coaling a mail steamer at Kingston, Jamaica, it would be difficult to conceive. On the quay were swarms of them, with features of the coarsest type, and dressed in rags of calico which had once been white, but were now grimy with coal-dust. By this time our eyes, noses, and ears were all equally offended, and our tempers were beginning to follow suit.

A lady once told me she had asked the captain on a voyage to Jamaica what was the real truth about the climate. His answer was, that if she could be landed in the Blue Mountains she would imagine herself to be in heaven itself, but as it was unluckily necessary to land first at Kingston, she would probably think she had got to the place farthest from it. Nothing could better describe the impression conveyed. I wondered now that yellow fever was not rampant still.

We arranged to spend the night at the Myrtle Bank Hotel, and in the meantime to formulate our plans for a tour through the island. I had at first made up my mind not to remain in Kingston for more than

a few hours, but the obvious inconvenience of getting off in so short a time compelled me to do so with a good deal of reluctance. The Myrtle Bank Hotel is a great mass of red brick forming three sides of a square, with numerous galleries and balconies. The gardens run down to the water's edge (a very doubtful advantage in the case of Kingston Harbour), and are planted out with palms and other tropical shrubs.

We breakfasted off porridge, iced oranges, and sundry fruits, which were set before us by tall, strapping negroes in white duck suits. It struck me that in the capacity of waiter the coloured man seems to bridge over the gulf between himself and his white brother more than in any other position. These men had all the mannerisms of the professional waiter, and if it had not been for their woolly heads, might well have been painted!

After breakfast we engaged a buggy, and went for a drive round Kingston. This, I may say, does not in many respects resemble a drive anywhere else. The paving of the streets is such as to suggest that one is being dragged along a shingle beach. This, in itself, affords considerable variety, but it is by no means all. The main streets are crossed at frequent intervals by gullies, which convey what appears to be the superfluous drainage of

Kingston into its long-suffering harbour. The possible inconvenience of being driven rapidly over these by reckless black drivers does not seem to have presented itself to the minds of those who planned them. Perhaps to constitutions enervated by heat and tropical fevers a thorough shaking up is beneficial. R. B., who has spent some years in these latitudes, endured it with more philosophy than I could bring to bear on the situation. My bones positively rattled, and I had to pull myself together and await the next shock with as much patience and courage as I could muster. I am glad to hear that an extensive system of drainage on modern principles is now being carried out, which ought to make the town healthier and more agreeable.

The town very much resembles Port of Spain in the dreary aspect of its streets. It has also its Johnny Crow, whose complexion, however, is red here instead of white. It was a strange medley of human beings that we saw streaming past us. White planters and officials, ragged-looking negroes in shabby straw hats with immense brims, or wide-awakes turned inside out, Haytian gentlemen, Spaniards and half-castes from the mainland, Cubans, mulattos, and coolies were passing and repassing incessantly. There was certainly much to observe in the intervals

of comparative peace which were vouchsafed to us. The drivers varied very much in appearance, some being more like a species of scarecrow than anything else I can think of, while others were inclined to be "dressy" and to give themselves airs. Our own was a bundle of rags with an old wide-awake hat, a most grotesque object, and he made way for nobody. Consequently we narrowly avoided a collision with another buggy, as there was no disposition to give way on either side. This little incident led to a violent interchange of views between the parties. The ferocity of their faces was so terrible that I shuddered at the thought of the language which was coming. At first our driver could only shake his fist in dumb fury, but he at last unbosomed himself with the words, "Shabby-looking man!" which he uttered in accents of the most withering contempt. Now the London cabby, with much less preparation, would have used epithets which do not appear in the dictionary at all; but the tone of the voice was unanswerable, and it evidently went home, for our adversary was stung to the quick. He made a lunge with his whip, but was too late. However, as he disappeared, he flung back over his shoulder an even more pointed retort. "Yah! dam nigger!" he yelled, in a voice which implied the most deadly hatred.

Needless to say, his own complexion was as black as the best household coal. I now gave up all attempts to unravel the workings of the negro mind. It clearly belongs to a different order of things from our own.

Kingston has not been for very long the capital of Jamaica. It came into prominence in 1692, after the great earthquake which destroyed Port Royal. This earthquake was one of the most terrible which has ever been felt even in the West Indies. A little before noon an awful rumbling was heard in the mountains on both sides of the harbour. Three violent shocks followed, and the houses and public buildings of Port Royal were soon crumbling like a child's castle on the sea-shore, the waves completely overwhelming them, until there was hardly a vestige left of many of the streets and wharves. The result was that Kingston now became the principal commercial town, but Spanish Town, the old Spanish capital, continued to be the seat of government. A long struggle for the mastery followed. In the middle of the eighteenth century the official records were removed to Kingston, but the opposition was so great that they were returned, and it was not until 1872 that Kingston won the day. In that year the famous statue of Lord Rodney in the Square at

Spanish Town was also brought over, but this caused such a genuine outburst of grief that it was magnanimously returned to its old resting-place. The statue was erected after Rodney's great victory over the French off Martinique, which saved Jamaica, as it did so many of the other islands, from falling into the hands of the French.

In the cool of the evening we drove out to some very beautiful botanical gardens at the foot of the outer ridges of the Blue Mountain range, known as Hope Gardens. For the first two or three miles our route lay along a hard, dusty road, lined with innumerable aloes, cacti, Spanish needles, and all manner of spiky tropical shrubs of that particular tribe which seems capable of thriving without a drop of moisture for its roots. Everything was covered with dust, and all the country round looked parched and dry. But as we got farther from the town the air grew fresher, the landscape greener, and the foliage more luxuriant. Palms, mangoes, bread-fruit trees, and bananas became more and more numerous. The crumpled spurs of the Blue Mountains closed in the picture, and at a height of 3900 feet we could clearly see the brilliant white houses of Newcastle perched on one of these lofty ridges. Every now and again the clouds would roll down and completely envelop

them, soon to be driven back, and as soon to return again to the attack.

Hope Garden contains many interesting specimens, but is not nearly so beautifully laid out as the Botanical Gardens in Trinidad. We were shown a plantation of nutmeg trees, which grow to a height of from twenty to forty feet, with simple leaves and pale yellow flowers. The chief peculiarity is that the trees are male and female, and only the female tree bears the fruit. Consequently the planting of a grove of nutmegs is a precarious speculation, for all of them may turn out to be males, in which case the loss is heavy. Only one male tree to about ten females is required.

On our way back to Kingston we called on Bishop Nuttall, the Bishop of Jamaica, to whom we had letters of introduction. He is a man of fine physique, but incessant hard work in a climate like that of Kingston had told upon his constitution. His wife and children were up in the hills, unable to support the heat, and he was living alone, and only able to see them now and again. Our black coachman fell into so deep a sleep during our absence that some considerable time was spent in bringing him back to the realities of life. A vigorous shaking was at length successful. On our arrival at the hotel he

demanded a preposterous sum for the drive. As R. B. had made the bargain I left him to argue it out, which they did for at least an hour. By that time they had become so hot over it that their complexions were respectively scarlet and green. The matter was finally referred to arbitration at the office of the hotel; but whenever we returned to Kingston we were liable to be baited in the streets, so that we felt inclined to summon the man, and have him bound over to keep the peace for the rest of his life, or at any rate till the *Royal Mail* should return. He knew that there was a misunderstanding about the fare, and was cunning enough to take full advantage of it, as we pointed out to him. The Jamaica black, however, does not follow the niceties of argument; his skull is very thick and his voice very loud, so he prefers abuse.

The next day we drove off to Kingston Station *en route* to Spanish Town, and thence to the north coast. Half an hour's run through cocoa-nut palms and other trees, with occasional glimpses of the harbour, brought us to the old capital. The railway carriages are better than any I had been in since leaving England, and as for R. B., he had not had such an experience for three years, and took quite a childish delight in the cushions. On arriving at

Spanish Town, my peace of mind was shattered by the discovery that my hand-camera—at this time my dearest friend—had been left in Kingston Station in the hurry of departure. The officials here were all black. Having induced one of these to telephone, I waited for a reply, at first patiently, afterwards with gradually increasing irritation. At last I insisted on knowing the result of the inquiry. R. B. had sought the peaceful atmosphere of the Rio Cobre Hotel, remembering my previous conduct. The only answer I could get as to what message had come in was that the Kingston people had "discountenanced them." Having adjured the man by all that he held dear not to use words of more than one syllable again, I demanded to have the message repeated. In the end there was almost a riot in the station, some of the officials rolling their eyes in a manner which made me look to my own safety, and make off with a great assumption of dignity to cover my retreat. As for the camera, it reached me after sundry adventures. Happily it was too conspicuous to be safely stolen. A mackintosh which was also left behind in all probability now adorns the back of one of the rising black aristocracy of Jamaica, for its place knew it no more. The quiet, soothing influence of the Rio Cobre Hotel was very welcome, and there my nervous

system gradually regained its normal condition. The hotel is a picturesque, low-storied building, with balconies and verandahs on both sides, standing in a lovely tropical garden, half a mile from the town and railway, without a discordant note to destroy the perfect harmony of the surroundings.

We sat dreamily on, smoking and keeping up a desultory conversation, and feeling that we should never desire to move again. Magnificent crotons, green, orange, and scarlet, were scattered about in pots below us, or planted out in beds interspersed with all manner of unknown plants and shrubs with red, purple, and yellow blossoms. A grand spreading Jamaica cedar (*Cedrela odorata*), the leaves of which are strongly scented, filled one corner of the garden; here a tall cocoa-nut palm bent its head gracefully in the wind; a young silk cotton-tree bursting out into little bunches of snow-white wool, threw out some of its branches almost within our reach; while the gigantic fronds of several fine bananas and plantains cast long deep shadows in the brilliant sunlight. Gorgeous butterflies flitted from flower to flower, and little humming birds poised themselves in the air with a peculiar whirring sound as they also extracted the honey from the numberless blossoms. Green lizards darted

about the balcony rails, stopping every now and then to look at us with a doubtful expression, but captivated entirely if we whistled a taking air. They would blink until they almost wept outright at the intensity of their feelings. The party at the hotel consisted of an old couple of a thoroughly homely type—the sort of people one would not have expected ever to leave their native village—and a somewhat opinionated Yankee, who was also a botanist and rather a wild man of the woods. For the first half of lunch there was a silence which could be felt, and which began to prey on my spirits, so that I decided to draw the Yankee. It was evident that our good friends had already fallen foul of each other. The conversation turned on mosquitoes, a topic which is equivalent to the weather in temperate climates, and the Yankee showed a disposition to “cap” every modest experience I ventured to relate. As for R. B., he maintained a dignified silence till he should see an opening for one of his epigrams. He rather despises the ordinary run of conversation.

I was told that in the West Indies it was impossible to form any conception of what mosquitoes were in the States. A man could be seen at a distance of several miles by the cloud of

mosquitoes hovering round his head. I listened to these little romances with patience and as much credulity as I could command, but the old gentleman opposite had evidently been subjected to the same ordeal before, for he was positively snorting with suppressed indignation, and war seemed to be in the air. Happily Ananias (as we afterwards called him), after vividly describing conflagrations he had seen all along the coast of Hayti from the *Royal Mail*, made his bow and retired. Directly he was gone the old couple found their tongues, and in a torrent of indignation they conjured us not to believe a word that he had said. They were on the same steamer, and they saw no villages on fire at all. If there had been any they would have seen them. We assured them that we were not in any danger of believing anything. We merely enjoyed the joke. They were, however, quite unable to see it in anything but a serious light.

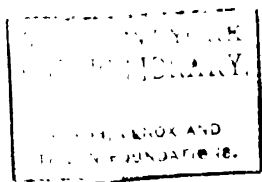
After these stormy scenes we wandered down to the Rio Cobre river, and there rambled about the banks, which are covered with dense masses of tropical vegetation, shutting out the whole outside world, so that it seemed incredible that we were within half a mile of a modern hotel! The vines and creepers poured in profusion over the trees

and shrubs, covering them as the snow covers the hedges in an English winter, or hanging in festoons from the branches of lofty trees to the surface of the river below. The stems of the bamboos strained and rattled in the wind with the sound which is so peculiar to them, and which conveys to those who hear it for the first time a strange and mysterious sensation.

Even in this beautiful spot we were found out and shadowed by a growing squadron of little black boys, who at length drove us back to the hotel. They stared at our faces, clothes, and boots, and more than ever at R. B.'s camera, which he had brought in search of subjects. We differed somewhat as to the attitude which should be adopted. I was in favour of strong measures, being at the time not a little influenced by the attentions of sundry mosquitoes and sand-flies. R. B., on the other hand, counselled a policy of indifference. He was accustomed to the tropics; mosquitoes did not bite him; and he regarded little nigger boys as beneath his notice. He took a photograph of an exquisite bit of river scenery, which was quite disfigured by a dozen of them grinning and making grimaces in the foreground. Then we returned to the hotel a little ruffled. Sitting out on the balcony,



THE RIO COURE OR COPPER RIVER.



however, with the darkness coming on and the fire-flies dancing in and out of the trees in front of us, and the soft air lightly fanning our brows, we very soon found ourselves once more in a blissful condition. The stars shone like brilliant jewels, and the Southern Cross was travelling slowly across the heavens. The frogs croaked and the crickets sang. Presently a spider on the balcony caught an unlucky fire-fly in his web. Here was an opportunity for a noble deed worthy of our exalted mood. We set free the captive and he fluttered away, evidently suffering from the shock, and hardly able to realise his good fortune. The spider we hewed in pieces and scattered to the four winds.

Next day was Sunday, and as Spanish Town possesses a fine cathedral, we decided to attend morning service. The town itself is in striking contrast to its noisy neighbour, Kingston. There is a quiet dignity about its central square which reminded me strongly of The Hague, and in fact the two places in their relations to one another closely resemble The Hague and Amsterdam. All round the square are stately buildings long since deserted, the old Government House with its ball-room and banqueting hall, the House of Assembly, the Court House, and the various offices. There

is something strangely sad and pathetic. Under a white cupola overlooking the square is the famous statue of Rodney, to which I have already referred. So great was the grief of the people on its removal in 1872, that they held a mock funeral, and placed the effigy of the statue in a coffin under the cupola where it had stood. Either from a magnanimous impulse, or from fear of a riot, the Government of Kingston, as I have said, decided to restore it.

The cathedral, which was built on the foundations of the old Spanish Red Cross Church of St Peter, is full of interesting monuments and inscriptions. Many a soldier and sailor who died in the service of his country lies buried here, also many governors of bygone days. We sat in the chancel, amongst a sprinkling of the aristocracy of the neighbourhood, and but for the dusky choir and the sea of black faces in the nave, we might have imagined ourselves back in England. The original name of this ancient city, when it was actually the Spanish capital, was St Iago de la Vega. When the island was taken from Spain in the seventeenth century, it lost its ancient title, and was given by the English the more common-place one by which it is now known.

On Monday morning we started off in a buggy, with two excellent Jamaica horses, for a drive of

ten or eleven miles to Bog Walk Station *en route* to Ewarton and Moneague. The Yankee waved his good-bye from one end of the verandah, while the ancient couple, attired in big sun-hats and puggarees, took up their position at the extreme opposite end. The head waiter, who might have been "Uncle Tom" restored to life again, came out bowing and smiling to speed us on our way. I can see him now standing on the steps and calling after us "Good travelling, sar," with his kind old face wreathed in smiles, as the horses plunged forward eager to be off. All the way to Bog Walk Station we followed the valley of the Rio Cobre. Gigantic cliffs towered above us, the river roared in the ravine below. Trees innumerable covered the sides of the hills, though the rocks were perpendicular and there was scarcely a particle of soil,—trees of every shade of colour too, and of innumerable species. Up and up we went, winding round and round with the bed of the river, as the valley narrowed itself into a deep gorge, the banks becoming more and more precipitous. Now and again we passed negro women washing clothes in the river, or a man punting a bamboo raft, till the stream became too shallow even for such craft as this. Emerging from the ravine, we found ourselves in

more open country, and another mile or so brought us to the station. Here we left our baggage, and drove out seven miles to see the famous "Natural Bridge," one of the most exquisite spots in Jamaica. The road here passes through green fields and water-meadows, and the country would be quite English but for the magnificent clumps of bamboos which grow in profusion in the meadows and along the banks of the streams. The Jamaica bamboo is even more delicate in form and colour than the Trinidad species, as its name, "The Feathery Bamboo," implies. We drove for some miles through a fertile plain, and then began to climb again into the mountains. We were toiling slowly up a long, tedious hill, where the road was barely broad enough for two vehicles to pass, when suddenly, like a flash of lightning, a mule dray came dashing round the corner, only thirty or forty yards in front of us, the animals plunging down the hill at a tremendous pace. On the box was a thing more like to a Guy Fawkes than a human being, clothed in the remnants of a calico shirt, with an article on his head which resembled a sun-bonnet turned inside out. In another moment I expected that there would be nothing but a few mangled remains to bear witness that we had once been there.

The creature on the box, however, yelling like a demon, and flourishing his whip, took a great swerve to the right; for a moment one wheel was over the side, and the list to port was such that the whole concern appeared to be on the eve of turning a somersault into the thick bush below. But the impetus saved him, and looking round we saw him continuing his wild career to the bottom, still utterly regardless of anything which might happen to be coming up behind. I am thankful to say we never crossed his path again, nor did I ever see his face except after badly cooked dinners in Jamaica lodgings.

A mile or so farther on our driver pulled up and directed us to climb down a steep winding path leading into a deep gully, the bottom of which was hidden by the dense trees. We could see nothing but their branches, until suddenly we found ourselves in a lovely grotto. A little mountain stream winds its way down the ravine beneath one's feet, whilst on either side perpendicular cliffs, covered with exquisite little ferns and masses of "vines" or creepers, rise sheer from the bed of the stream. Creepers hang in festoons from the trunks and branches of the trees above to the level of the water seventy or eighty feet below, and at one point the

rocks meet in a solid ledge over the ravine, strong enough to support one of the principal roads in the island. It is a remarkable freak of nature, and I should much like to hear a geologist's opinion as to the history of its formation.

Returning again to Bog Walk, we took the train to Ewarton, which lies at the foot of another range of mountains nearly in the centre of the island. The railway plunges almost immediately into the midst of a rich and luxuriant valley, and seems to be lost in a wild profusion of palms, mangoes, bread-fruit trees, coffee and cacao plantations, orange groves, silk-cottons, Jamaica pears, and a hundred others far too numerous to describe. The orange trees were a new feature in the landscape, for they are not grown in many of the islands, and the rich colour of the ripe fruit as it hung in bunches from the trees, added greatly to the beauty of the picture. The failure of the orange crops in Florida some years ago has given an impetus to the trade in Jamaica, and it is now considered to have great possibilities. The fruit is being shipped to New York, and recently to London.

From Ewarton we drove on by buggy to Moneague. Almost immediately the road begins to climb, and winds its way up through dense forests till it

reaches the shoulder of Mount Diablo, a fine sugar-loaf mountain about two thousand feet in height. As we rose higher and higher, the air grew keen and fresh, and we were obliged to turn up our collars and huddle together to keep warm. The temperature must have been about 68° Fahr. Looking back, we could see a vast plain below us, and the tops of the trees stretching far away to the horizon. In the far distance we could see the outline of the Blue Mountain Range, and a glimpse of Kingston Harbour. Steep as the gradient is here, the horses went forward at a swinging trot, hardly once relapsing into a walk till we had reached a height of about 1700 feet. The keen mountain air, and the pace at which we were going, gave us a feeling of intense exhilaration. The sun went down, and darkness came on rapidly as we began the descent on the other side. The stars came out one by one; richly wooded hills grouped themselves on every side of us; in front was a glorious pink glow in the western sky; and the fire-flies were flashing all around us as we plunged along. Finally we entered what looked like a beautifully laid-out park, and drove briskly up a steep incline to the Moneague Hotel, which stands at the summit of a little hill commanding a magnificent panorama of the country for many miles.

The hotel is one of a series which have been recently erected in Jamaica in the hope of attracting English and American tourists. All of these are built on a magnificent scale, and are furnished regardless of expense, with fascinating balconies running all round the building, and usually approached by a covered way. Unfortunately the attendance is altogether out of keeping with the surroundings. There was something absolutely grotesque in the appearance of a shabby-looking black boy in his shirt sleeves, with a dirty cap on his head, who came to bring me my early tea in the morning, in the midst of all this magnificence. An improvement will certainly have to be made in this respect if the movement is to be a success. In itself it is a sign of energy which is highly to be commended, and with better local management ought to be the means of attracting visitors to the island. Much of the scenery can scarcely be surpassed anywhere in the world, and it is only the impossible condition of some of the old-fashioned inns which has kept people away. I say "some" advisedly, because we ourselves found notable exceptions. This defect of bad attendance could easily be remedied. A strong white manager is a necessity to keep the black servants up to the mark. When under proper

control they will make good servants, but they are very unfit for positions of any responsibility.

We woke up next morning to find ourselves in a veritable garden of Eden. Immediately round the hotel the ground was gently undulating, and planted out with magnificent timber, the turf being fresh and green as in an English park. Tall silk-cotton trees, with majestic trunks and spreading boughs, reared themselves grandly in the foreground. These are the giants of the forest, the famous "ceibas" worshipped by the natives as favourite haunts of the "jumbies," the negro's household gods. Some of them attain to a height of about one hundred feet from the ground to the lowest branches. The pod of the silk-cotton tree yields a fibre which is used for stuffing cushions, but is not strong enough for the thread to be utilised in the same way as that of the cotton plant.

A complete chain of densely-wooded mountains formed the background of the picture. Until about 7.30 A.M. a thick white mist enveloped us, and the air was as fresh and cool as if it were an ideal spring morning in England. As the tropical sun rose, the mists gradually rolled away along the valleys, producing a succession of glorious atmospheric effects.

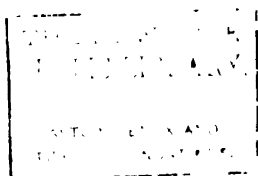
Our driver of yesterday, Mr Johnson, seemed to

be a negro of more than average intelligence. We therefore bargained with him to take us to Montego Bay. His knowledge of the trees and flowers was considerable, and he had evidently received a fair education, which was combined with intelligence and genuine pride in his native island. We started at about ten o'clock for St Anne's Bay, our first halting-place. About four or five miles from Moneague the high road descends towards the sea-shore through an exquisite ravine known as Fern Gully. The banks on either side here are covered with a wealth of ferns of innumerable species such as only the tropics can produce. Masses of trees cover the mountain sides, which rise almost perpendicularly to a height of 1000 or 1500 feet. Lovely mosses and creepers are everywhere interwoven with ferns and flowering plants. Scarlet and purple orchids peep out here and there amongst the luxuriant undergrowth. In the distance a glimpse of the blue sea is visible lying far below.

We rattled down the hills at a grand pace, and in another half hour came to a standstill in the picturesque village street of Ocho Rios, with its wooden balconied houses and tall cocoa-nut palms. The name of "Eight Rivers" is due to the presence of innumerable rivulets which find their way down



OCHO RIOS.



to the sea along this fertile coast. Winding its way round beautiful little cliffs and headlands rich with sea-grapes and other shrubs, the road from Ocho Rios crosses "Roaring River," another of Jamaica's loveliest spots. A stream of white, milky liquid comes tumbling over ledges of limestone rock in a series of cataracts out of the very midst of a lovely glade of trees, with delicate white stems and magnificent pear-shaped leaves. We left our buggy and Mr Johnson on the road, and climbed for some distance up the bed of this strange river. Looking round, we might well have imagined ourselves in some fairy palace, with column on column succeeding one another as far as the eye could reach. Everything seemed to be white, for the strong solution of silica in the water is for ever depositing itself on rocks and tree trunks which oppose its progress, so that a process of petrification is continually going on. By a strange coincidence the stems of the monjock trees, as they are called by the natives, are peculiarly white also, and the effect of the whole scene is unique and exceedingly striking.

The ground was swampy and covered with twisted roots and stumps, which made progress difficult. R. B., who is accustomed to tropical bush, skipped nimbly from one point of vantage to another. It

was not long, however, before he fell into one of those subtle traps which are so common in these regions. Seizing the stem of one of the monjock trees, he was about to swing himself over some swampy ground, when with a crackling sound the whole tree gave way, and he was nearly precipitated into the chalky water. To my astonishment I now saw that the trunk was perfectly hollow, all the pith having been eaten out by red ants, which began to emerge in swarms, angry and excited. Big, evil-looking creatures they were, and they appeared to mean mischief. From their point of view, no doubt, there was no small grievance to complain of, and recognising this, we made haste to place a broad ditch between ourselves and the enemy. To all appearances they had got all that was possible out of that tree. Probably they decided to emigrate and try their fortune elsewhere when they discovered that we had evacuated the position. We made our way back to the buggy, and continued our journey to St Anne's Bay, where we put up at "Mrs Watson's lodging."

St Anne's Bay is a quaint little town, with a long, straggling street, nestling under tall coconut palms, within a few yards of the tropical beach. Mrs Watson's lodging is in the street, and Mrs

Watson (a portly mulatto woman) was engaged at the time of our visit in erecting new buildings with a view to enlarging her establishment. We unfortunately had to be accommodated in the old wing which, like the town, was quaint. On the whole, quaintness is best appreciated from the outside. A number of negro girls with woolly heads and bare feet were bustling about, followed by lean, hungry-looking cats. What the exact duties of any particular one of this handsome retinue were we could not definitely ascertain. There was a cook, distinguished by her proportions, and apparently several house-parlour-maids, and a juvenile kitchen-maid who gazed at us wonderingly with large round eyes. The cats were there, no doubt, to keep the number of mice within reasonable limits, and if they had made the most of their opportunities they would not have been lean. Amongst the company the Jamaica cockroach was well to the fore, and carried himself not without dignity. Mrs Watson, with arms akimbo, directed operations.

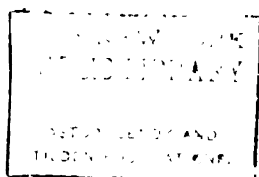
We sat in the window to enjoy the cool air as it came off the sea, but the perfumes which played around us were somehow not exactly what we had anticipated. On the ground floor underneath was a salt-fish store, and the odour of that salt fish rose

softly in the still air, and diffused itself through the room in which we sat. It is one of those species of perfumes which are too powerful to be enjoyed for any great length of time. R. B. was inclined to regard it as interesting, and not without its good points. I, on the other hand, soon became conscious of being physically incapable of experiencing any more of it. We discussed the different points of view from which we regarded the smell, and then adjourned to the beach. Here the glory of the tropical night was undisturbed, and we sat long by the waves watching the fire-flies dipping in the water, and gazing at the stars which shone like jewels in the heavens.

Next morning Mrs Watson showed us her new buildings, which are neat and picturesque, and have a really cosy, home-like appearance. We should have no hesitation in recommending this new wing to travellers. The road to Brownstown skirts the beach amongst palms, cacti, sea-grapes, Spanish needles, and other quaint tropical shrubs, till it reaches Runaway Bay, so called because here the last Spanish governor, Don Sasi, took a hasty departure from the island, leaving Cromwell's forces under Penn and Venables in possession. The spot is marked by a rum-shop, which was crowded this



A JAMAICA RUM-SHOP.



morning with stalwart negresses, chattering and laughing excitedly, who had come to see off a band on its way to a neighbouring ball. The bandsmen, whose white pith helmets were in striking contrast to their dusky features, were fortifying themselves with rum before driving off in a couple of buggies which were waiting under the cocoa-nut palms by the sea-shore.

We strolled on to the beach, and sent a little monkey of a boy swarming up one of the palm trees to knock us down some of the green cocoa-nuts, from which we drank a refreshing draught, scooping out a hole at one end. While thus engaged we were accosted by a black gentleman, whose vanity, even for a negro, was unequalled. He had made a little fortune by growing bananas and exporting them to America, and he was living on the fat of the land, having sent his son and heir to be educated as a doctor at Edinburgh University. "I pres-u-me you are strangers here," he exclaimed, with an indescribable accent on the last syllable of the word "presume," at the same time making a species of court bow and taking off his hat with a sweep. He then struck an effective attitude and continued, "And, er—I hope you like our country." I was about to expatiate on its beauties, when he struck

another theatrical attitude so monstrous that it was evident the man was too much eaten up with self-conceit to even listen to our replies. We therefore, with an elaborate exchange of courtesies, wished him good morning and rejoined our buggy.

The scenery becomes richer and more beautiful as the road turns inland and approaches Brownstown, and the soil changes to a deep red hue, which forms a brilliant contrast to the bright green of the cane fields, bamboos, and bananas. This "red earth," as it is called, is produced by the decomposition of the limestone, and is exceedingly fertile. The vividness of the colouring here, under the powerful tropical sun, can hardly be surpassed in nature. The colours of the houses vary from a rich yellow to a deep maroon. Brownstown itself is an exceptionally bright, cheery little town, neat and picturesque at the same time, and Miss Delisser's lodging is as charming as the rest of it. From the top of a ridge of hills opposite there is an exquisite view of the town, the bright little houses dotted about amongst the palms, bread-fruit trees and mangoes on the brow of the hill, making quite a brilliant picture. We hastened up to this spot to get a photograph before sunset. The people of Brownstown seemed feverishly anxious that we

should see their new Court-house, which was probably the only object in the whole surroundings that was not pleasing to the eye. The negro mind does not appear capable of appreciating nice distinctions in the way of time and distance. We explained that it was particularly necessary to reach the top of the ridge in a certain time, and requested to be told as nearly as possible how long it ought to take us, but could only elicit the reply, "Not too long, sir!" and no amount of explanation had the effect of extorting anything further. We eventually found a guide who conducted us to a little cottage garden belonging to a typical "Uncle Ned," with all his family gathered round him. His wool was almost white, and he had a kindly face, but he very soon tried our patience to the uttermost. We felt that we were under an obligation to the old man for allowing us to use his garden, and endeavoured to bear with him. But the sun was rapidly disappearing, and when he insisted on introducing us to his wife, sister-in-law, daughter, and cousins, it was more than we could endure. He then dilated on the beauties of the place, made various impossible suggestions as to points of view, and finally began to grab at the legs of R. B.'s camera, with the object of steadying it while the latter's

head was under the focussing - cloth. This last development almost caused the latter to commit an aggravated assault. The photograph was at last taken, but the result was not brilliant.

Next morning we started early, and drove on through Stewart's Town, which is prettily situated at the bottom of a fertile valley, to Falmouth, which we reached about mid-day. Here we stayed for lunch and a short rest. The town is of considerable size, having a population of more than three thousand, and a capacious Court-house, but the heat was fiercer here than at any place we stopped at, the glare on the cobbled streets being terrific. We took refuge for a short time in the Court-house. Here a case was being tried, but we were too far off to follow it. The men and women were ranged on each side of the building, most of them spectators, for the negroes are great litigants, and sharp enough too if the question affects them personally. Most of the women were giggling and showing their white teeth freely. Black police in white duck and white pith helmets kept the people in order with an air of immense importance.

From Falmouth we drove to Montego Bay, one of the principal seaport towns in Jamaica. The original name was "Mantica," or "lard," for the Spaniards did a considerable trade in this com-

modity. The trade of Montego Bay had fallen very much into decay until comparatively recently. Now a great effort is being made to grow and export fruit, chiefly oranges and bananas, to the United States. Two very good lines of steamers to that country have sprung into existence, and the outlook for the future is very promising. There is a good market for fruit in New York. In the matter of hotels there is certainly room for great improvement. That which we put up at did not profess to be more than "Mrs ——'s lodging," and it was primitive and uncomfortable. We sat down to dinner, a very motley company. There was the local doctor and an American commercial traveller. There was a sea-captain's wife who tormented her little boy by cramming down his throat all manner of things which he did not like, causing him to utter very discordant cries of distress; and there was a youth who gazed upon us with such utter astonishment throughout dinner that we wondered whether he thought we had dropped from the moon. We were waited on by a very dirty little coolie woman and a small mulatto boy about twelve years old, who gave himself such airs that he might have been manager of the hotel. Mine host, who was a real white man, took the head of the table.

Next morning we took leave of our very efficient coachman, Mr Johnson, who had driven us about ninety miles, and left Montego Bay by the railway for Montpelier, a beautiful spot in the interior. We had some little difficulty in getting to the station, for the black drivers did not happen to want a fare, and were disposed not to come. This state of things drew forth a torrent of eloquence from our good landlady on the abyss into which Jamaica was falling. "De white men am all dead away," she said, "and no one to take deir place." Then she launched forth into a tirade on the insolence and independence of the blacks. There was no knowing what they were coming to. They would not do anything they were told now. Out of thirteen offices in the town, eleven were already in the hands of coloured men. The whites were all leaving the island. Finally, she besought me when I returned to England, "to get de House of Commons to call a meeting, and send out more white men." I told her I feared I had not the influence over the House of Commons which she imagined. She still seemed to think I could set everything right, and almost threw herself upon my neck in her emotion. Needless to say, she was a coloured woman herself.

It is true, nevertheless, that the number of Englishmen in Jamaica is steadily decreasing, and the fact is much to be deplored. There is, perhaps, not very much opening for professional men, though there are both legal and medical appointments which are filled up by the Secretary for the Colonies, and there appears to be room for a certain number of barristers in private practice. There are also educational appointments to be had. But it is for young men with a small amount of capital that Jamaica offers such an excellent field. The climate on the slopes of the Blue Mountains is most healthy, and even beneficial for persons in the first stages of consumption. The soil is rich and fertile, and nearly every tropical product can be successfully cultivated, with the exception of a few which require the steaming atmosphere of the South American swamps. The life of a planter in Jamaica is both pleasant and profitable. He can combine agriculture with the breeding of cattle and horses, for which there is always a good market. Properties of about 200 to 1000 acres have been officially estimated to cost from £500 to £3000, and purchasers of Crown Lands can now acquire it from the Government on the hire-purchase system, on condition that a house is built on the property within six

months, and is occupied by the planter or his agent. Of course it is one thing to spend a few weeks in Jamaica and another to settle down and work there, but a few months will enable a man to decide whether the climate suits him, and will also give him the opportunity of obtaining such experience as he will require. The Colonial Office supply detailed information through their new branch, The Emigrants Information Office, at 31 Broadway, Westminster.

At Montpelier another gigantic hotel has recently been built, larger than the one at Moneague. The site chosen is also a very beautiful one, overlooking a panorama of forests which extends to the horizon on all sides, and is enclosed by a ring of hills. The scene is one of quiet beauty, not of wild grandeur, and there is no discordant note to disturb the peacefulness of the surroundings. The hotel itself stands on a gentle eminence overlooking the plain which encircles it, and has a balcony which extends the whole way round the building, and affords ample protection from sun, wind, or rain, from whatever quarter. The afternoon was stormy and the sky was black with heavy clouds, the outlines of which were at times very grand. As time went on we could hear the distant roar of the rain-

drops on the leaves, and by the sound could easily trace the progress of the storm. Its gradual approach was very impressive, the roar becoming louder and louder until it broke right over us with a deafening noise. We could see other storms moving in different directions, and in a very short time the one which had passed over us was moving rapidly away. Later in the day the sky cleared, and the effects were magnificent as the storm clouds dispersed. The sun went down, and in a short time it was dusk. The whole air now resounded with the song of the frogs, crickets, chack-chacks, and all the creatures of a tropical night; and here, in addition to all these strange sounds, was the sweet song of the nightingale, mingling strangely with the hoarse croaking of the chack-chack from the depths of the foliage. All round us the fire-flies flashed incessantly, describing endless circles of brilliant light against the black background of the forests, till one might have imagined the fairies were holding some great carnival.

It was with much regret that we left this lovely spot next morning, but time was short, and we had to press on to Mandeville, travelling by train to Williamsfield, and driving the remaining five miles from there. No one who visits Jamaica should miss

this railway journey. Deep gorges below, and precipices far above, mountain torrents and black mangrove swamps, tall majestic silk-cotton trees and bamboos bending gracefully in the breeze; in all these wonderful forms and varieties does Nature display herself to the bewildered traveller as the little train climbs steadily upward from the plains to the mountainous regions of the interior. One is reminded to some extent of the approach to the St Gothard Pass in the Alps, but the scene is infinitely more varied, and the foliage more luxuriant.

After so much grandeur, the homely, English appearance of Mandeville is almost startling. Picture a little sloping village green, with a typical English village church at one corner, and surrounded by bright little houses nestling amongst the trees. The houses are tropical in appearance, and the shrubs and trees are not such as one would see in England, but these we had become so accustomed to that they hardly dispelled the illusion.

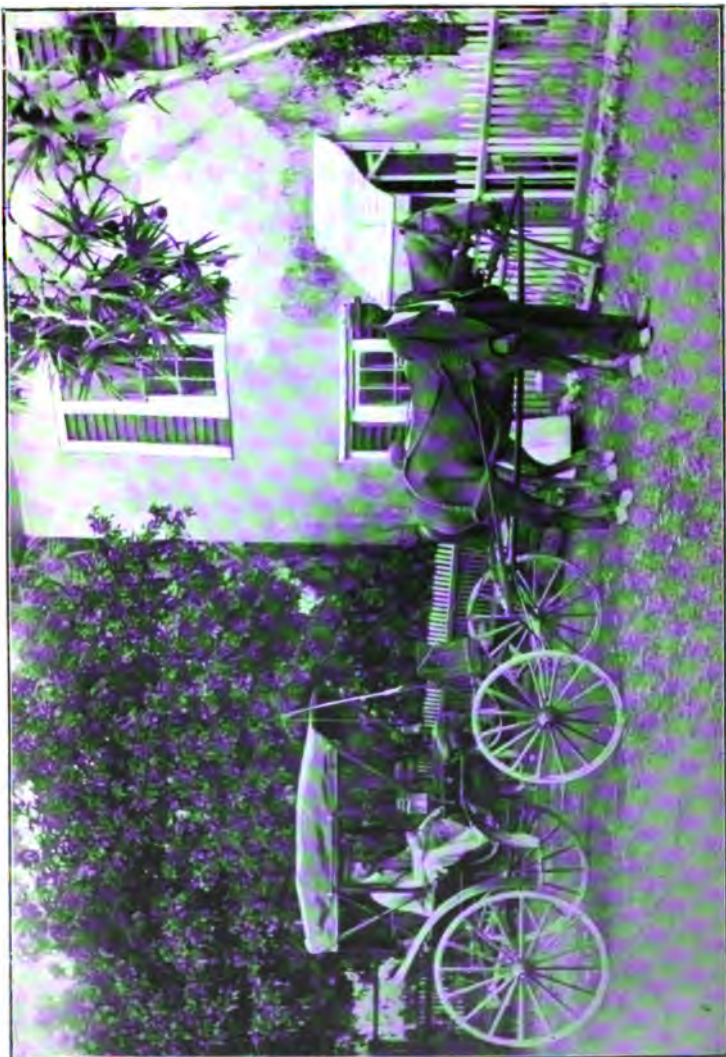
Mandeville stands at the height of more than two thousand feet above the level of the sea; consequently the heat is seldom unbearable, and blankets are frequently required at night, for the temperature often falls to 60° or lower.

It happened to be Saturday evening, and the

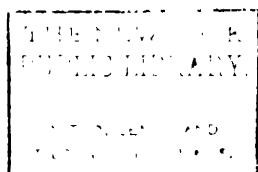
people were all on their way home from market, the women as usual carrying all their purchases on their heads. Fruits, vegetables, and sundry household utensils were piled up in quantities large enough to fill a good-sized Gladstone bag. In most cases a fine capacious "gamp" was laid across the top, but how this would ever protect sufficiently such a perambulating chandler's shop it was difficult to see. The men were running races and turning somersaults like children on the village green. The light-heartedness of the West Indian black is almost unique. There is an utter "abandon" about his enjoyment of life which is quite impossible to the white man. The laughing and chattering were incessant; grizzled old negroes, with grey beards and whiskers, were jogging home on donkeys with their feet almost dragging on the ground, attired in old wide-awake hats with umbrellas under their arms, and singing or talking to themselves. Little groups collected from time to time to gossip or to wrangle over some little event of the day. Gradually as darkness came on they dwindled away, the long caravan stretching far down the high-road till it was lost to sight. Next morning everyone turned out in their Sunday best. Big hulking negresses were attired in gorge-

ous silks and satins, and truly wonderful hats with broad brims and feathers, and ribbons of the most elaborate and stylish description. The woolly heads under all this fashionable headgear were pathetically ludicrous. Some had contrived, after years of labour, to gather up a little bunch at the back, which gave them an honourable position in negro society. The men were, most of them, more or less loud and flashy in their get-up, and affected a horsey air. All were bubbling over with self-conceit. We came to the conclusion that Sunday was not the day to see the Jamaica negro in his most pleasing aspect, although the scene was a most comical one.

Later on we drove out to Spur Tree Hill, where the ground falls away abruptly, and a vast plain suddenly bursts upon the view, fully three thousand feet beneath one, with the ocean beyond. The afternoon was grey and stormy, which rather added to the mystery of the vast panorama which lay spread out like a scroll below us. Banks of white fleecy clouds moved along the valley, the tops of the hills standing out like islands in a great sea. As we drove along, the thunder rumbled ominously amongst the hills, but the storm must have spent itself elsewhere, for it died gradually away. For



OUR BUGGY, JAMAICA.



some considerable distance we had an escort of twenty or thirty little woolly-headed school children, who took an intense interest in our proceedings. We bowed and smiled at them benevolently, and were on the most cordial of terms; but when it came to our having to walk up a steep hill to rest the horses, at a pace adapted to a sultry day in the tropics, the benevolent smile soon faded away. By the time we were able to go forward again our feelings had become, as the negroes say, "not too friendly."

Next morning we took the train again at Williamsfield. Passing through the very heart of the mountains, in the midst of magnificent forest scenery, the railway finds its way slowly downwards till it reaches the plain of Kingston, more than two thousand feet below. In a few hours one seems to have been transported from a temperate climate into a tropical one, so overpowering is the heat of Kingston after the cool air of the mountains.

CHAPTER IX.

JAMAICA—THE EAST COAST.

WE stayed only one night at the Myrtle Bank Hotel, before starting off on a second tour round the eastern side of the island. For five or six miles the coast road hugs the shores of Kingston Harbour, with the beautiful wooded slopes and spurs of Long Mountain on the left. From time to time a fishing-boat, with the black fishermen getting in their nets, gives variety to the scene, and picturesque brown sails are moving over the blue waters. The road soon crosses the narrow strip of land called the Palisades, to which Kingston owes its unique natural harbour, and as we go farther west the mountains recede farther from the coast-line, and a constant succession of rivers find their way down rocky beds to the sea. Two of them, Hope River and Yallah River, are amongst the largest in the island, but now they were nothing but tiny streams meandering lazily in the middle of a broad, shingly water-course,

with stunted bushes and shrubs dotted about. The width of the river-beds is so great, and the rivers rise so suddenly after tropical storms, that it is impossible to build adequate bridges, and without them it is never safe to attempt the drive from Kingston to Morant Bay in the rainy season. We could well realise what an awful torrent it would be that could fill the whole of one of these water-courses in a day. Often travellers have succeeded in crossing the Hope River, only to find the Yallah River impassable, and retreat at the same time cut off, while others have been carried away with traps, horses, and everything else by the flood. Even now the water came up over the step of our buggy in places. Two miles beyond Yallah River is the Salt Pond, a deadly-looking lake of morass water, surrounded by a tangle of mangroves, with a narrow opening to the sea. The brown marsh water has an uncanny look as it breaks in small wavelets of dirty froth against the roots of the mangroves round its edges. A heavy, dank smell rises from it, and we were very glad to leave it far behind, and breathe again the fresh pure air from off the open sea.

Morant Bay is a little town, with something over one thousand inhabitants, at the mouth of the Morant River, where large quantities of fruit are sent off,

chiefly to the United States. It looks now quiet and peaceful enough, yet it was here that the opening scene in the great rebellion of 1865 was enacted. On the 11th of October in that year, the Vestry of St Thomas had met to transact the business of the parish as usual. A few volunteers were drawn up to guard the Court-house, in anticipation of a possible disturbance. At about three in the afternoon, however, a mob of several hundred negroes surrounded the building with loud cries of "Colour for colour," and began hurling stones at the volunteers. Immediately the proclamation known as "Reading the Riot Act" was read out to the rioters, and when they showed no signs of dispersing, the volunteers opened fire. They were, however, outnumbered by the negroes, and almost all cut to pieces, both officers and men. Most of the civil functionaries of the town were then murdered in cold blood. This was the first serious outbreak, and it was followed by atrocities all over the island. There seems to have been a good deal of smouldering discontent amongst the negroes for a considerable time, owing to bad crops and high prices; but the immediate cause of the insurrection was a meeting held in Kingston, at which they were urged by coloured agitators to "form themselves into societies, hold public meetings, and co-operate for

the purpose of setting forth their grievances." The chair was taken by a certain Mr Gordon, a coloured man, who had himself been born a slave, but who had since risen to a position of some importance in the island. He was a man of considerable property, and was also one of the elected members of the Legislative Council. His presence gave additional importance to the meeting, and the speeches, which may have been intended only to suggest a constitutional agitation, inflamed the negro mind to such an extent that the outbreak at Morant was the almost immediate consequence. To speak to such men of constitutional methods was pure folly; their only conception of a change in the government was to murder every white man in the island and themselves take possession. We ourselves were struck with the difference in demeanour between the Jamaica negro and those we came across in the smaller islands. The former is usually arrogant and self-assertive, instead of being somewhat obsequious, as he often is elsewhere. The effect of the close proximity of Hayti is very marked. During our stay in Kingston, the Myrtle Bank Hotel was filled with Haytian exiles, some of whom had been on board the *Medway*, waiting for the reversal of a decree of their Senate to enable them to return. Their presence

must have been a strong reminder to the Jamaicans of their own struggle for independence. Perhaps some, however, have the sense to see how much they gain nowadays by a good government as compared with the chaos of a black republic. The rebellion was very quickly suppressed as soon as the island was thoroughly aroused, and Governor Eyre then proceeded to try the ringleaders by court-martial in a summary manner. Mr Gordon himself, amongst others, was hastily tried, convicted, and hanged in a way which allowed no possibility of a proper sifting of the evidence. The home Government appointed a commission to inquire into the whole question, and the report which they issued was exceedingly severe,—they considered (1) that the punishment inflicted during martial law was excessive; (2) that the punishment of death was unnecessarily frequent; (3) that the floggings were reckless, and at Bath positively barbarous; (4) that the burning of one thousand houses was wanton and cruel. There seems little doubt that the whites in the island gave way to their feelings of revenge, and scarcely acted in a judicial spirit. There has since been rather a strong reaction in favour of the negro, and one often hears the complaint that Jamaica is fast drifting towards the time when it will be a black republic itself. Many Govern-

ment posts are filled by coloured men, and it seems almost impossible for the white and the mulatto to live contentedly together on terms of social equality. It ends in the white man going.

From Morant Bay we drove by the coast road to Fisherman's Bay, and then turned inland, following the course of a lovely valley to Bath. This last bit of road is indeed scarcely rivalled in Jamaica for its exquisite beauty. We followed the course of a deep ravine, the vegetation becoming richer at every turn of the road, masses and masses of feathery bamboos covering the mountain sides, and ferns, mosses, and creepers growing in a wild tangle along the banks.

We drove at length into the little sylvan town of Bath, nestling in a garden of strange tropical trees, amongst which were specimens imported from every quarter of the globe. Miss Duffy's lodging, with its picturesque balcony overlooking this vision of beauty, and its shady little yard overshadowed by the spreading leaves of a magnificent bread-fruit tree, tempted us to spend the rest of our days in Bath. We found that the inside of her charming little house in no way belied its cosy appearance.

Tired and stiff after driving nearly forty miles cramped up in a buggy, we were glad to stretch our

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limbs on the shady balcony. Close to the wall was a calabash tree, with its huge green fruit hanging like cannon-balls from the branches. The rind of this fruit is made by the negroes into cups for carrying water, and these "calabashes" soon become familiar objects in Jamaica. In a meadow opposite were big forest trees with gorgeous blossoms, some red and some orange. The names of all the varieties here it would be impossible for any one but an expert to grasp, still less to remember. Among the most striking was the Otaheite Apple, a tall, majestic tree, with luxuriant foliage and bright scarlet blossoms. Another was the Guango (*Pithecolobium saman*), a near relation of the wild tamarind. This tree is often as much as six feet in diameter, with spreading branches, and covered with blossoms of a mauve tint and delicate texture. There were also several specimens of the akee, naturalised from West Africa—a bushy tree with leaves like those of an ash, and bearing on its branches a beautiful scarlet fruit, which splits open when ripe, and displays a row of black seeds enclosed in a white pulp. The akee has a delicious scent and flavour, and is not unlike a nectarine. Here, too, we saw a gigantic silk-cotton tree, with its trunk covered to a height of about

forty or fifty feet with the aerial roots of a wild fig, which was slowly crushing the life out of it.

Miss Duffy gave us an excellent little dinner, well cooked and nicely served, and we strolled out afterwards to explore and to enjoy the cool night air. On a little green plot in the village we came upon a meeting of the Salvation Army. Several negro orators from other parts of the island were haranguing their audience from a cart in impassioned language, with an occasional beating of drums. Their speeches were of a very blood-and-thunder description, and seemed to consist of endless repetition. But their noise and vehemence, with the help of the drums, were clearly making an impression. Whilst we were standing on the outskirts of the crowd listening, a white man came up to us, and introducing himself as Dr S——, the medical officer of the district, very kindly asked us into his house for some coffee and a smoke, where we spent a most pleasant evening. Mrs S—— complained bitterly of their lonely position, for they had no near neighbours, and often for weeks she scarcely spoke to any one of their own colour. For one who had been accustomed to plenty of English society the life must be a severe trial. They had one little child, the sweetest little girl

imaginable, about two years of age, with fair flaxen hair, such as is not common in the district of St Thomas, Jamaica. Dr S—— has a considerable practice amongst the negro population, and often goes up to the Maroon settlement at Moore Town, crossing the Blue Mountains by the Cuna-Cuna Pass. We much wished that we could have made an expedition with him to visit these interesting people. They have become quite distinct from the ordinary Jamaica negro in customs and in character, living quite to themselves, and maintaining a kind of primitive government of their own. Their ancestors were slaves of the old Spanish planters, who would never submit to their fate, and escaped to the mountains, their numbers gradually increasing as time went on. For many centuries they were a terror to the island, every now and then making raids into the valleys, plundering the estates, and slaughtering any who resisted them. No attempt to drive them from their strongholds has ever succeeded. During the eighteenth century the trouble reached its climax, and the troops had to be called into action. Many skirmishes were fought, but the Maroons always retreated to the mountains, and could not be drawn out into the open, where they would have been out-

numbered. In the end it was actually necessary to conclude a formal treaty of peace, the Government making over certain lands, and giving them the right to maintain their own local institutions. From that day they have had their own government, which is not unlike that of an old Saxon village community. A head man is chosen, and there are primitive laws. As they have always been augmented from the most warlike of the slaves, they are a fine, independent race, combining the best African blood with that of the fiercest of the Caribs. But they ceased from the time that concessions were made to them to have the character of brigands, and lived peaceably on their own land. In 1865, however, they showed their fighting capacity in a strangely different way, giving assistance to the governor in the suppression of the negro rising. Dr S—— gave us his own impression of them. They are quite without the childish vanity of the plantation negro, whilst they know they are on an equal footing with the white man, and this knowledge gives them a quiet dignity of their own. They take a pride in their customs and institutions, and are always pleased to receive and entertain a stranger if he comes in a friendly spirit. He himself had received much kindness at their hands.

We rose early next morning in order to take the baths before breakfast. Up in the mountains, about a mile and a half from the town, is a hot spring which has great medicinal properties, and from which Bath derives its name. The approach to it is up a deep gorge, the beauty of which fairly beat everything else we had seen. Wherever the eye looked there was nothing but one mass of lovely foliage, bathed in the soft light of the early morning sun. The exquisite colouring of the bamboos, which grew in the wildest profusion, surpassed the most delicate green of the young leaves at the opening of an English summer.

Down in the valley below we could hear the little river roaring in its rocky bed. Above us we could see nothing but trees, trees, trees everywhere, ending in a fringe of bamboo feathers against the deep blue of the tropical sky, with here and there a great silk-cotton tree, standing a head and shoulders over all, like a giant presiding over the councils of the forest.

A turn of the road brings us suddenly to the little wooden house in which are the stone basins for bathing in the waters of the spring. The water is strongly impregnated with sulphur, and contains

also a certain amount of soda and calcium. The temperature is 126° Fahr. It is considered to be especially good for rheumatism and skin affections. The hot spring water is afterwards turned off, and the bath filled with delicious cool water from the mountains. The plunge into this after the steaming sulphur is most refreshing.

We found an American tourist with his family lodging in the house, and in company with him we inspected the source of the hot springs, a little higher up by the side of the mountain; here the water is almost too hot to bear one's hand in it.

Miss Duffy had prepared for us a most excellent breakfast, to which we did full justice after our long ramble. After inscribing our names in her visitors' book, and recording our appreciation of her snug little house, we set off again *en route* for Port Antonio. Passing the court-house and police station under the shade of magnificent trees, we turned northwards towards Manchioneal, on the north-east coast. The road climbs up into the hills, passing through extensive plantations of bananas, plantains, cocoa-nut palms and palmistes, and skirting the range of the Blue Mountains, whose clustering peaks are seen away to the left. Looking back, the fields of bananas

and young palm trees in the broad valley below make a striking picture. Descending again towards the sea-coast, we drove through a district which was rich in gigantic silk-cotton trees growing on quite open ground, so that we were able to take in fully their magnificent proportions. The vegetation grew thinner as we approached the north coast. Herds of fine Jamaica cattle, with shaggy coats and spreading horns, were grazing here and there in the plain, the pasture land being interspersed with occasional cane-fields.

This species of cattle is produced by a cross between Indian and European breeds, both of which are imported into the island. Cattle-breeding, or "pen-keeping," is a very profitable employment, and is often carried on jointly with plantation work. Pen-keeping also includes the breeding of horses and mules, sheep-farming, and the rearing of small stock, such as pigs, goats, poultry, and rabbits. Horses are much in demand for riding and driving and for polo. There are as many as fifty-four thousand in the island including mules. Cattle are raised either for the butcher or planter, but now that the sugar trade has so much declined,

• • there is considerably less demand from the planters.

The climate, however, is so favourable to the rearing of cattle, and the luxuriant guinea grass such an excellent food for them, that it is still found to be a highly profitable employment. The pens vary in extent from 800 to 2000 acres, and are divided into pastures, some of which are common land and others under guinea grass, which has a coarse, stubbly appearance.

Our horses were in fine form, and covered the last six or seven miles to Manchioneal in a wonderfully short time. They are lean and miserable creatures to look at, these Jamaica horses, but they know their business well, and go up and down the hills like the wind.

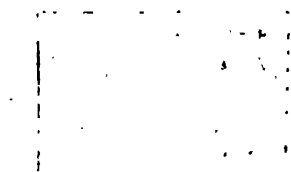
Manchioneal is a peaceful little hamlet fringing the tropical beach, built in a tiny bay, with a bold and densely wooded headland enclosing it on the northern side. The brilliant blue of the tropical sea ended in a line of white breakers, foaming and thundering on the sandy beach, the white froth glistening in the sunlight. A light wooden pier and shed for storing and shipping away bananas completed the picture. On the high road looking out over the sea we found a quaint little lodging, where it was evident that very little business was

done. In answer to our knocks, a bulky mulatto woman appeared, and after some thought decided that she could give us some "sheep mutton" and yams, and a little dry bread. We wondered what other mutton we could possibly have demanded. She brought us some enormous chunks, which must have belonged to a sheep of fine proportions. On a cold, frosty day in England they might have been tackled with more determination, but they made our hearts fail us under a Jamaica sun. The waitress was a little black girl whose head just reached the table, with bare feet and legs, and a veritable mop of wool. She gazed at us with solemn eyes, but would not be drawn into conversation. Her one idea of waiting was to make a pounce upon us and carry off whatever she could as soon as possible, whilst we jealously watched our plates to save them from being kidnapped.

The route to Port Antonio lies all along the coast for some twenty-one miles, and is one long succession of exquisite little coves and rivulets, the spurs of the John Crow Mountains rising one behind another to the south. The trade-wind lashes the sea into a long line of surf, which rolls in under the palm trees, and breaks into clouds of foam against the deep red rocks.



COAST SCENERY.



Rivers come roaring down the mountain valleys sometimes with high wooded banks of red sandstone, sometimes in low gravelly beds, discharging themselves into the sea in a volume of tossing and whirling water. As evening drew on, we left the John Crow Mountains behind, and the highest peaks of the Blue Mountains themselves burst suddenly into view, wrapped in a soft, blue haze, but without a cloud resting upon them. We realised in a moment the perfect appropriateness of the name.

The sun was now setting, and we entered on a long stretch of mangrove swamp which fringes the shore to the eastward of Port Antonio. It was the worst possible time for crossing it, and we could easily detect the miasma rising as we drove quickly along. At one point we narrowly escaped a truly awful experience, for a negro, driving recklessly home from market in a small cart, dashed nearly into us, and our driver, in swerving to one side to avoid him, let one of the wheels sink deep into the morass water. Another inch or two, and we should have been struggling in the swamp. The horses were so thirsty after the long, hot drive, that the driver, as I thought very rashly, allowed them to stop at one of the little bridges, and drink from the stagnant water.

We drove into Port Antonio in brilliant moonlight between seven and eight o'clock. It is a place which is rising rapidly in importance. A broad street, with some very good buildings, including a new market, runs down the centre of the town, which is built partly on a hill and partly by the sea-shore. Some isolated rocks known as Navy Island, jutting out into the sea, form a division between the eastern and western harbours. The latter is deep enough to allow of large steamers coming up close to the wharves. On a point at the entrance to this harbour, called Folly Point, a new lighthouse has been built, which is a great assistance to vessels in finding the way in, the appearance of the coast being very misleading. The houses dotted about amongst the trees above make a pleasing picture, and the whole town, with its two harbours, and its combination of hill and plain, is most picturesquely built. The old fort and barracks are striking objects in the view. Port Antonio owes its prosperity to the rising trade in bananas with the United States, and more especially to the Boston Fruit Company, which owns many estates in the northern district of the island, and employs a great deal of labour. This company is the successor of an enterprising Yankee gentleman,

who was on a visit to the island, and who foresaw that the banana would have a great sale in America if sufficient quantities of it could be shipped there. His experiment has been eminently successful, and has revived the prosperity of the whole of this part of the island. There are now steamers running between Port Antonio and New York, and a new railway is in course of construction, which will connect the town with Kingston round the eastern side of the island. We came across the works, which are now in an advanced stage, at many points during our progress from Kingston. The opening of the new line will be an epoch in Jamaican history.

The best inn at Port Antonio appears to be Miss Brown's lodging, which stands in a good position on the hill overlooking the harbour. We unfortunately only heard of it afterwards, and were mistakenly recommended to an inn in the main street, which was perhaps the most uncomfortable shelter we experienced in Jamaica. A noisy crew of seafaring men were devouring a nondescript meal in the kitchen. Dirty black waiters banged plates and dishes about, and threw meat, fruit, and vegetables on the table in a perfect jumble—allowing the meagrest supply of forks and plates. This, I must say, was the

only inn we came across in Jamaica where things were done in this fashion. A perfect plague of flies added much to the general discomfort, and we made haste to get out of these exceedingly disagreeable surroundings.

It was a brilliant moonlight night, such as one only sees in the tropics, and we strolled down to the end of the point, beyond the barracks, and sat down by the rocks with the wash of the waves below us. The prospect from this point has impressed itself upon my mind with particular vividness. Clear and sharp in the brilliant moonlight the peaks of the Blue Mountains rose in a cluster to landward, the edge of every peak being clearly defined. A delicate grey-blue tint softened the hardness of the outlines. Round the shores of the bay the little white houses shone out in the moonlight. The waves were breaking gently over the rocks beneath us, leaving a fringe of glistening foam. The picture as a whole was not unlike the view of the Bay of Naples, with Mount Vesuvius in the distance.

We had still an ordeal to go through before retiring for the night, for a large party of fine West Indian cockroaches were holding a reception in the kitchen. Photographic plates had to be changed before morn-

ing, and no other part of the establishment was available for the purpose. No less than fifteen were assembled on the table when we entered. Let me warn the amateur photographer never to forget his red lamp in Jamaica. We had done so, and when the door was closed upon us we felt like prisoners shut into a dark dungeon with no means of escape. With shaking hands, and cold perspiration on our brows, we groped about in the darkness, while shudders passed through our trembling frames at every suspicious sound or sensation. I may mention that the West Indian cockroach is not only of abnormal proportions, but he also has a pair of wings, and these wings are so constructed that he moves through the air quite noiselessly, and alights upon any part of the person without the slightest warning. The rest may be left to the imagination of my readers. We crept out at last, and took brandies and sodas, and other restoratives, and breathed again freely.

Next morning our driver met us with the cheering news that one of the horses had been very ill all night, and he was not sure whether we could get on. As I expected, "drinkin' de black water" had disagreed with him. The prospect of another meal in

that "Black Hole of Calcutta," and another night under the same roof, sent our hearts down into our boots, but by ten o'clock things had so far mended that we were able to get away. Following the coast for twenty or thirty miles, we crossed at St Margaret's Bay the mouth of the Rio Grande River, which rises at a height of six thousand feet in the heart of the mountains. At Buff Bay we halted for lunch, but our buggy was the only shelter, for there is no inn which is even passable. We rested again at Annotto Bay, a busy little town with a long, straggling street of wooden one-storied houses and numerous stores. Coolies were here in large numbers. We stood for some time on the bridge which crosses the Wagwater River, watching the black washerwoman "smacking" the clothes with little wooden bats. A small, copper-coloured coolie boy was plunging about in the water, and presently he brought up a big crayfish, which he held at arm's length, standing up to his waist in the water, and anathematising it in the most terrifying manner. His little face screwed itself into all kinds of contortions. He then began to play with the unhappy crayfish as a cat does with a mouse. Getting tired of this, he turned his attention to an old washerwoman

—a motherly old thing—who proceeded to give him a lesson in her own craft. The negroes and coolies seem as a rule to consider themselves quite outside one another's ken, but here they seemed to be fraternising more than usual. The little groups round the various stores were picturesque and full of interest.

The swamps round the Wagwater River have interfered somewhat with the prospects of Annotto Bay, but it is not unlikely that a remedy will some day be found by draining the low-lying ground.

Leaving Annotto Bay, we turned inland once more, following the course of the Wagwater River through another of Jamaica's glorious valleys, our hearts somewhat sad as we reflected that this might be the last we should ever see. Towards evening we reached Castleton, a perfect little paradise in the heart of the Blue Mountains. Down in the ravine below we caught glimpses of the river, whilst on the slopes of the mountains have been laid out botanical gardens which have scarcely a rival in the world. Almost every species of tropical tree, flower, or shrub is here represented. Orchids of innumerable species abound. Palms from every quarter of the globe are planted in close proximity to one another, and grow to their full height and dimen-

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sions. Tea, coffee, cocoa, olives, india-rubber, nutmegs, tobacco, ginger, pimento, and a host of other shrubs of economic value, can all be comfortably inspected. The cocoa-nut palm and the grou-grou with its prickly stem, stand side by side with the sago-palm, palmyra, and date-palm of the East. Shady walks wind hither and thither with picturesque rustic seats scattered negligently about under the shade of spreading trees.

Adjoining the gardens has been built, on the American system, a little hotel village known as Castleton Cottages. Under one roof are to be found the coffee-room and other public rooms, whilst all the bedrooms are scattered about, each cottage, of which there are about half a dozen, containing two or three rooms. One of these is specially reserved for newly-married couples, and is known as the Honeymoon Cottage. No more ideal spot in which to sit down and rest in perfect peace and idleness could possibly be imagined. Often and often since my thoughts have wandered back to it, and I have never ceased to regret that we were obliged to hurry on so soon.

We were called next morning by a little bare-legged, woolly-headed negro boy. Amongst the

greatest luxuries in most West Indian hotels are the large stone baths, which in some cases almost attain the dimensions of a miniature swimming-bath. Looking forward to another plunge into one of these, I requested our small valet to show me the way to the hotel bath. Beckoning me with his black finger, and saying, "Dis way, sar," he strode out into the garden, whilst I followed after him with my towel and sponge, respectably, but somewhat lightly clad. We walked some distance through the gardens and past the main building, and still we continued to walk along winding paths, whilst no vestige of any kind of outbuilding appeared in view. I began to be puzzled, and then irritated, and demanded to be told at once where he was taking me to in my nocturnal garb and carrying a sponge in my hand. But not a word could I extract, except "Dis way, sar," which he uttered in a tone implying that no further explanation ought to be needed. On and on we trudged, till I was boiling over with impotent wrath, knowing that I could never find the way back, and failing to make any impression on my impassive guide. Presently, to my infinite astonishment, we crossed the high road, and here I attempted further expostulations, which only

drew forth the same answer, and we trudged on again, through gates and across fields, till I began seriously to wonder if I was not being lured into some trap. How did I know that these people were to be trusted? I felt distinctly uncomfortable. Suddenly I became conscious of the sound of rushing water, and in another moment we were on the bank of my old friend the Wagwater River. With the same impassive air he pointed to a deep pool under some large boulders in mid-stream, and this was the hotel bath! It was all very well, but we had walked nearly a mile as it seemed to me, and I had been made to look very ridiculous in crossing the high road under such conditions. I was by no means appeased, but started him off at a run to fetch R. B. without delay. I then sat down on a rock by the water's edge, and for a few moments was quite lost in the beauty of the surroundings. This mood, however, did not last very long, for the mosquitoes and sand-flies found me out, and until R. B.'s arrival on the scene I spent the time in dancing and viciously beating about with my towel. At length R. B. appeared through the bushes, like a scarecrow, with his hair standing on end, and an expression suggestive of

demanding satisfaction. All the instructions he had had were, "De gentleman say to come to de bath." Nevertheless he had not brought a sponge, which I took as evidence that he had smelt a rat. We discussed the matter, and then we entered that historic bath, the floor of which was somewhat irregular and treacherous, whilst the sand-flies were very attentive to our faces until we got into deep water. The return to the hotel was less painful, for we were fortified by each other's company.

After breakfast, and a stroll round those glorious gardens, we set out once more for Kingston. Along a winding valley, amongst dense masses of tropical foliage, the road makes its way, the bed of the river on one side, and the steep slopes of the mountains on the other. Then we began to ascend up and up amongst the crumpled ridges and shoulders of the Blue Mountain range. From time to time mule drays came galloping past us down the hill, and stalwart negresses trooped past with piles of bananas on their heads. The scenery becomes less luxuriant, but more wild and grand. Innumerable negro huts are scattered along the road and on the mountain sides, each with its little plot of ground, on which mangoes, bananas,

sweet potatoes, and yams are grown for consumption and for the market.

At length we reach the summit of Stony Hill, over which the road passes. Here there is a little settlement, consisting of small cabins and different kinds of stores, at one of which we purchase a bag of cakes from a little black girl, who seems to have a new standard of coinage, and there is some difficulty in effecting a bargain. The plain of Kingston comes into view, as we descend the opposite slope, and presently the red roofs of the city, with the Palisades and the blue sea beyond. The air becomes closer, and the road hot and dusty, and the vegetation thinner, as we draw near to the plain. We pass the famous Constant Spring Hotel on our left, and drive on and on along the hard dusty road to Half-Way Tree, amongst innumerable aloes and cacti, and at last we are bumping and rattling over the cobbles of King Street, and pull up once more in the spacious courtyard of the Myrtle Bank Hotel.

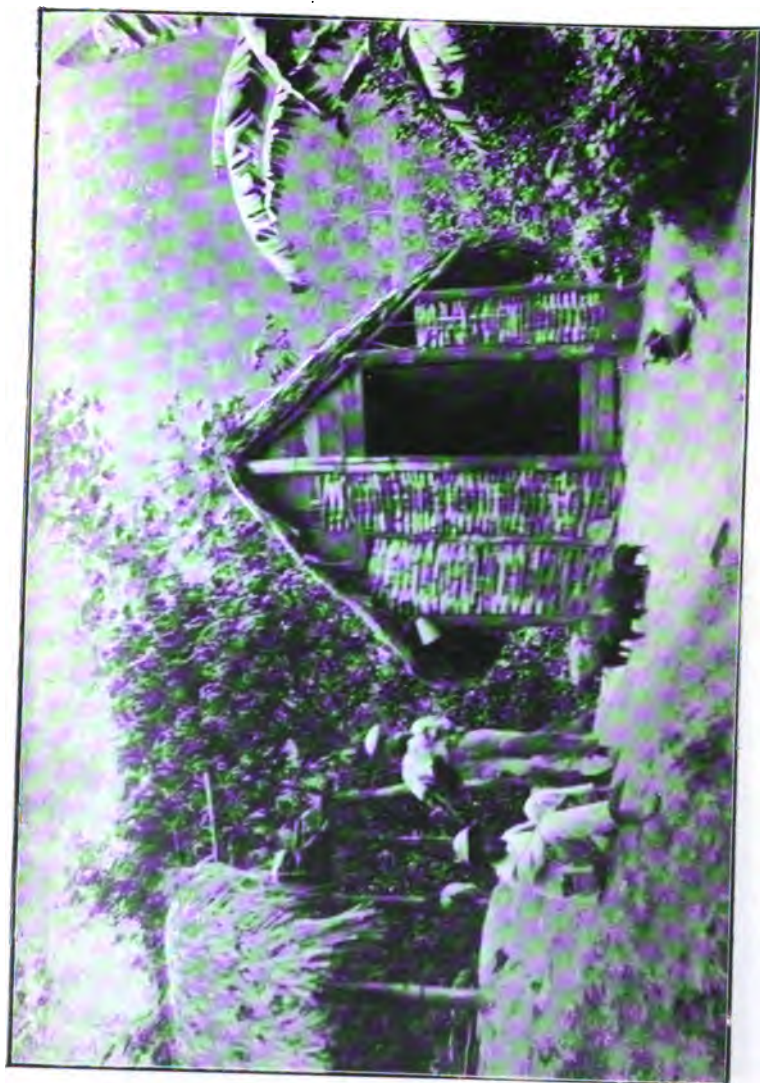
CHAPTER X.

THE BLUE MOUNTAINS.

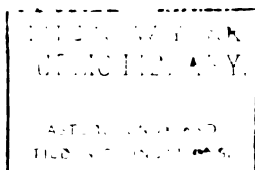
ON our arrival at Kingston we had to at once set about making arrangements for the ascent of Blue Mountain Peak, which we had determined to undertake before leaving Jamaica. It was now Saturday morning, and the mail for Barbados was due on Tuesday, so there was very little time to be lost. All information can be obtained from Messrs Bolton & Son, Duke Street, who also supply the means of transport. We hired a two-horse buggy, and drove off to Gordon Town, which is about ten miles from Kingston, at the head of a long valley, nestling amongst the spurs of the mountains. Here the carriage road ends, and ponies have to be hired at Messrs Bolton's branch stables. R. B. decided to walk the whole distance, but this I do not recommend to anybody who is not thoroughly acclimatised. I

myself hired a white polo-pony, which was brought out for inspection, feeling that it was very desirable to have something to fall back upon. We also annexed a baggage mule, and an amiable looking black boy, about nineteen years of age, as driver. Having arranged the caravan, we repaired to some stores for provisions, and laid in a stock of tinned meats, eggs, tea, jam, and other delicacies. At about one o'clock we set out, R. B. striding manfully ahead, while I followed demurely on my white steed. The boy and the mule, regarding each other askance, and every now and then showing signs of unmistakable hostility, brought up the rear. The mule was evidently the least well-disposed member of the party. He did not look straightforward, and the way in which he manipulated his ears was not reassuring. However, we were comforted by the reflection that the two of them must probably understand each other.

The first stage of our journey was to the summit of a lofty spur known as Guava Ridge. From this point the path leads downwards again through a little village, and then through thick bushes until it reaches the bed of the Green River, 1700 feet below the summit of the pass. We rested on the



HOME-LIFE, JAMAICA.



top for lunch, and then, leaving the commissariat to follow, we walked on briskly till we came to the river. It is three or four hundred yards broad, but was now almost dry. We sat down to rest, and bathed our hot feet in the cool water. Then came the sand-flies and drove us away. The caravan had now come up with us, and we all forded the stream, which did not come much above our knees, walking. The sun was beginning to get low, and we started again to climb the mountain by an easy winding path. The horizontal rays of the sun were scorching, so I mounted my steed once more. The boy began to warn us that we must push on quickly, if we wished to accomplish our first day's march before nightfall. Our first destination was Abbey Green, which is situate about 3900 feet above sea-level. Here, through the kindness of Colonel W——, who owns coffee estates in this neighbourhood, we had been offered beds for the night, and by this means we hoped to avoid having to spend a night in a miserable little hut on the top of the Peak. We brought with us a note to the overseer; but as it was Saturday, there was just an ugly possibility that he might have locked up the house and gone away for Sunday. We had the key of the hut with us,

but the sun was fast sinking, and it would be too late to reach the summit now. The light on the sides of the mountains all around us was glorious as we climbed higher and higher. Peaks which had towered above us were now far below. As the sun sank, the moon shone out brightly, and the air was cool and invigorating. On the slope of the mountain, round a big curve, our boy pointed out about a mile away a large white building, which he said was Abbey Green. Our spirits rose, for we were beginning to long for rest and refreshment. There was no other house within miles, and the scene was quite weird in the brilliant moonlight. Suddenly I heard a dull thud, and the boy who was now riding my pony fell forward on to its neck, and then rolled off on to the ground, howling and shrieking like a maniac, and calling loudly on his mother. His face was ghastly green, and his shrieks echoed over the mountain-sides till my hair stood on end with horror. Was it some ghastly nightmare, or had an awful accident happened? We rushed forward, but at first could get nothing coherent out of him. At last we discovered what had occurred. That awful mule—watching his opportunity carefully—had let out with his hoof

and kicked the poor boy violently on the knee-cap. He was in great agony, but I succeeded in getting him into the saddle, while R. B. rushed after the "nightmare," which had taken advantage of the confusion of the first few moments to amble off with our provisions and effects. He was easily out-manceuvred, though it required some skill to keep out of reach of his hoofs.

As for the boy, we got him along gradually, half-supporting him in the saddle. At last we saw the out-buildings of Abbey Green only a hundred yards ahead of us. Our relief may well be imagined! We opened the gate and got the patient in with difficulty. Then we drove in the mule. There was an air of desolation about the place. The next moment we were set upon in the half-darkness by three or four savage-looking dogs, which seemed to spring up at us out of the ground from all directions. There was no sign of a human being. Keeping the dogs at bay as best we could, we made our way up to the house and knocked repeatedly and desperately. There was not a sound from within. We looked at each other with grim faces. I was almost in despair, when suddenly the roofs of some outhouses down below caught my

eye. We decided to try them. "I suppose there is nothing for it," said R. B., "but to face those dogs again." So we fought our way through them till we reached the door of a wooden shed. Here we knocked again loudly. At last, to our infinite relief, we heard something like a savage grunt, and presently the door was opened slowly, and the features of a grizzled old negro, with woolly grey beard and whiskers, peered out upon us. He was more like a baboon than a human being, but we felt that he must have at least some fraction of a human soul, at any rate a heart. However, he was not at all pleased at being disturbed, and declared that "Mr J—— he go 'way dis marnin' and take de key," so he could not let us into the house. Our hearts sank. Nevertheless, I determined to get something out of him, and at length he consented to let us sleep in a dirty little hut where there was an old mattress, a small deal table and a chair. By the light of a farthing lamp we had a forlorn meal. The old man showed great sympathy over our boy, and repeatedly ejaculated "Poor fellah! poor fellah!" as he accompanied us to the hut. He brought hot water and bathed his knee, while I explored my medicine chest for suitable appliances.

The boy was installed in the hut on the other side of a partition, and we heard "poor fellah!" repeated in soothing tones as the night wore on. We threw ourselves at length on the mattress in our ulsters and fell asleep. Towards morning we awoke in horror to hear shrieks and peals of hysterical laughter on the other side of the wall. The mule was tramping about the yard and snorting, the dogs were sniffing round the hut outside, rats scampered about, and the moonlight streamed in through chinks in the wall, making us feel as if we were bewitched. Indeed, if I had been alone, I verily believe I should have gone raving mad that night. There was nothing more we could possibly do for the unfortunate boy. His hideous laughter gradually died away, and we fell asleep once more. The old man was to rouse us at four o'clock, in time to reach the Peak before sunrise, but he did not come till five, when it was too late. We were so thankful, however, to see daylight again, that we hardly cared. On the broad platform or "barbecue" used for drying the coffee we performed our toilet, shivering with cold in the mountain air. The old man brought us hot water, and we made a cup of tea, which was very soothing

from the suggestion of domestic comforts which it conveyed. The boy was decidedly better, though his knee was much swelled and he could not walk. We hardly knew what our next move was to be, and were rather gloomily considering the question when a little black boy was seen making his way down the mountain. To our infinite surprise and delight he brought an invitation to breakfast from Mr C——, inspector of schools in Kingston, to whom we had had an introduction, and who was spending his holiday with his wife and family at Portland Gap, 5500 feet above the sea, and nearly half way to the top of the Peak. I think I may safely say that no invitation to breakfast was ever more welcome!

We set out as soon as possible, and at nine o'clock we were sitting down in a cosy little room, with a roaring wood fire, with Mr C—— and his family, to a regular English breakfast. At this altitude the temperature was like that of an English spring. Every now and then the mists rolled down and enveloped everything; then they cleared away as quickly as they had come, and the sun shone brilliantly. We all went out for a lovely ramble along the mountain paths, and saw the source of

the Hope River in a bed of ferns and mosses. Every tree and shrub here was covered with moss, and wild strawberries were abundant. We also saw clover and other temperate plants.

In the afternoon we set out for the Peak, and after a long climb, just before sunset we found ourselves on the summit at last—7423 feet above the sea. There did not seem much prospect, however, of seeing the view for which we had gone through so much. Everything was enveloped in mist, but there was a fresh breeze which was driving the clouds before it. This gave some promise of improvement. Meanwhile we explored the hut which might have been our quarters for the night. It was so uncomfortable that we felt not a little consoled for our experience at Abbey Green. There was not even a mattress. Cooking utensils, a few forms and rubbish of various kinds, were lying about in confusion. There were no means of making oneself warm, and the wind, which was very much colder at this high altitude, came in at every chink. When we came out again the mists were dispersing, and in a few minutes more the winds had scattered them. Then a glorious panorama was unveiled before us. The peaks of all the mountains were lit up by the rays of

the setting sun. A lovely pink light was over everything. Down below white fleecy clouds were drifting rapidly along the valleys, driven by the wind. To north and south we could see the blue sea beyond. The houses of Port Antonio and the line of white surf were clearly visible. It was a view never to be forgotten. As we stood enchanted, a large brown owl with white breast came flying silently across the valley just below us, and vanished in the distance. Not a sound disturbed the solitude. We seemed to be alone with nature. Hurrying along the ridge, we reached the East Peak in time to get another panorama before the light disappeared. The sun now dropped below the horizon, and in a very short time it was night. By the light of the moon we began our long descent, which was accomplished without further adventure. We called to report ourselves at Portland Gap, and continuing the descent, reached Abbey Green between nine and ten at night. Here we found that Mr J—— had returned, and every possible arrangement had been made for our comfort. Our boy had been well looked after, and it was hoped he would be able to sit the pony next day. This turned out to be the case, though it was a slow and painful process, and the climb to the top of

Guava Ridge on foot was exhausting in the extreme. However, we reached Gordon Town safely, delivered over our fellow-travellers to Messrs Bolton, and drove into Kingston luxuriously in the cool of the evening. As we left the town, the last thing we saw was our boy standing by the roadside, waving to us with a grin of satisfaction which relieved us of all further anxiety about him.

This brought our tour in Jamaica almost to a close. The next day, Tuesday, the *Royal Mail* steamer was expected back from Colon, and would convey us on to Barbados. But we had still one very pleasant episode before leaving, and that was an evening spent at Cherry Garden, the house of Mr M——, manager of the Colonial Bank, where Froude stayed during his visit to Jamaica, and an excellent description of which appears in his book. Cherry Garden is some few miles out of Kingston, and the drive in an open buggy by moonlight was most enjoyable. Mr M—— is popularly known as "King of Jamaica," and we certainly had never experienced more ideal hospitality or met with greater courtesy than we received at the hands of Mrs M—— and himself.

And so we bade farewell to Jamaica, retaining many a pleasant memory, and soon forgetting all

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that was unpleasant in those three not uneventful weeks. It will indeed be a thousand pities if an island which has such capabilities is allowed to sink into the condition of another Hayti. The Colonial Office, through the Emigrants' Department, are now taking great pains to make its advantages known, and the Royal Mail Company have also done much to make a visit to Jamaica easy and comfortable, so I trust that before long we shall see a revival of its ancient prosperity. Signs of new activity are already apparent, and an influx of new blood, and more especially of capital, are now alone wanted to restore Jamaica to its proper position in the empire.

CONCLUSION.

THERE is little to record about the voyage home. We stayed at Barbados long enough to see old friends and wish them "good-bye," a process which was accompanied by so brisk an exchange of "cock-tails" that the captain suddenly closed the "bar," and all visitors had to leave hastily, much to their disgust. Here I had to leave R. B., who has an appointment in the island, and resume the voyage alone. For ten days out of the twelve the weather was almost perfect. The ship, which was heavily loaded, scarcely rolled perceptibly. Most of our time was occupied in tournaments of "deck golf," a game which becomes almost as fascinating as its prototype.

It was not until we got to the "roaring forties" that we experienced any change. About two days before we were due at Plymouth we got into the teeth of a nor'-easter, which made the good ship pitch and plunge horribly, and made us all rush for

overcoats and ulsters, which we did not part with again.

On Wednesday morning we sighted the Lizard at about ten o'clock A.M. The Cornish coast looked strangely bleak and bare after the palm-fringed shores of Trinidad. I seemed to be regarding it with different eyes.

At three o'clock we anchored in Plymouth Sound, and in another half hour were ashore and surrounded by good honest white faces, which made us feel glad, whatever drawbacks there might be and whatever else the world might have to show us, there was no place like "Old England" all the same!

And so I wish my readers farewell, hoping these pages may stimulate others to visit a corner of the British Empire which has been much neglected, but which I hope and trust has yet a prosperous future before it.

THE END.

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2

